Reverse Culture Shock: A Study of Readjustment Problems Faced by the Japanese Returnee Company-Wives

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the re-entry adjustment of Japanese returnee company-wives who have lived abroad accompanying their husbands during overseas assignments. It is specifically concerned with the socio-psychological problems and dilemmas which these wives faced in their own lives after returning to Japan. The study describes how the returnee wives interpreted their overseas experiences after their return. It examines the nature of the problems faced by these women and the factors associated with their readjustment problems. It particularly focuses on the strategies employed by the returnee wives in overcoming their difficulties.

The lack of literature and paucity of studies relating to the re-entry adjustment of returnee wives caused this inquiry to be descriptive and exploratory in nature. Extensive pilot work led to intensive, semi-structured interviews carried out with thirty-five Japanese returnee wives. The results showed varying degrees of re-entry shock and readjustment difficulty, which could be generally described by the wives' feelings of marginality and alienation. Attitudinal variables seemed to have a significant effect on their readjustment and the severity of the difficulties seemed to be strongly influenced by Japanese culture.

This study is one of the few empirical attempts to assess the readjustment difficulties from the perspective of accompanying spouses. The results should help returnee women to identify the main sources of their stress and facilitate the development of strategies for coping with reverse culture shock. The findings

throw new light upon gender roles within Japanese society. They illustrate the unique socio-economic circumstances of Japanese company-wives in the context of a deep-rooted Japanese corporate culture and the conservative path which must be taken on becoming the wife of a Japanese company man. They also present an alternative perspective in contributing to our understanding of modern Japanese corporate culture and may be helpful in the development of company sponsored support structures.

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Background

This is a study about women who have accompanied their husbands during work assignments in a foreign country ("company-wives"). It is the culmination of a long-standing interest in some of the psychological and social problems and dilemmas which accompanying wives face in relating their husbands' work lives to their own lives. It is specifically concerned with the socio-psychological problems they face after returning to their home country—the problems and difficulties confronted upon repatriation. This is of particular importance because the reality of the "reverse culture shock" is often ignored. Re-entry is often assumed to be an easy transition since it involves returning to one's home country—the implicit assumption being that returnees should have no trouble readapting to their familiar environment. However, repatriation is anything but simple.

The topic of this study came through the researcher's personal experience of returning to Japan after four years living in the U.S.A. followed by relocation to the U.K. for a further four years, three years later. It was evident that the company-wives' repatriation experience is not an easy process. This finding led to the topic of research, and prompted some very different questions about the repatriation experience to those asked by previous researchers examining the readjustment problems faced by returnees. In order to explore the phenomenon further, returnee wives, located through personal connections, were questioned informally. This informal questioning highlighted a common problem: most of the

wives reported their personal sense of dislocation and dissatisfaction following repatriation. It was assumed that what they were experiencing was re-entry shock. This growing interest also led to prolonged informal research with company-wives residing in the U.K. This was then developed to become a full research study using a qualitative interview approach, which demonstrated more clearly the fundamental issues to be explored. The specific focus of inquiry was further developed as the research progressed.

A fuller description of the research methodology and the investigative methods used is presented in Chapters 3. This chapter will describe the phenomenon of interest together with the perceived justification for studying the phenomenon, and then define the aim of the study and its implications for promoting the well-being of returning sojourners and facilitating their reintegration into their home society.

1.2 Phenomenon of Interest

During the "Heisei Bubbling Boom" (1987-1992), Japanese multinational companies increased their investment abroad, establishing subsidiaries for both production and sales operations. A growing number of Japanese employees from these companies were sent overseas, often with their families, to work in subsidiaries and to take part in special projects. Although the volume of foreign investment by Japanese multinational corporations has been decreasing after the "Heisei Depression" (1993 to the present), the wave of globalisation has created a demand for Japanese employees to be internationally located, particularly in

Southeast Asian countries. Overseas assignments are still common throughout Japanese international businesses and this has led to a large number of the employees' family members being stationed in a foreign country. According to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statistics, in 2001 there were approximately 544,400 Japanese nationals living overseas, as non-permanent long-term residents (defined as those residing abroad for at least three months) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, Statistics 2001). Of these long-term residents, the largest group—about 57 percent—consisted of business people and their families.

At the end of their overseas assignments, most Japanese employees and their families return to their native culture. For some family members, such as babies born during their fathers' overseas assignments, this return may be their first real impression of Japan. In 2001, there were approximately 30,000 returnee children, who came back to Japan within three years, and attended about 9,000 schools all over Japan (Ministry of Education in Japan, 2003). People typically have difficulties when moving between cultures. However, even with all the difficulties in cross-cultural adjustment, most people look back on their overseas experiences as an enriching and challenging part of their lives. But these sojourners have, in Brislin et al.'s (1986) term, "another hurdle to face", which is their return to their own culture. After finally adjusting to the new environment in a foreign country, the family is faced with the shock of returning to an unreceptive environment in Japan—a culture shock in reverse.

It is generally believed that most returnees have adapted to their home environment with relative ease and little anxiety. In fact, contrary to the

expectation that returning to a familiar place is easy, re-entry moves often generate a great deal of stress. Werkman (1986) states that people who have lived overseas often report that it is far less stressful to leave their home country and find a place in a new country than it is to experience the unexpected jolt of coming back home.

Many returnee wives interviewed in Muto's (1994) study also describe feelings of dissatisfaction with their lives, though they cannot pinpoint the basis of their problems. Their readjustment may, at times, cover subconscious feelings of alienation, disappointment, discomfort and depression. They are able to readjust to life in Japan, but are not comfortable with that readjustment. The problems of fitting into their home culture once again can be serious and, at times, long-lasting. Most Japanese families who have lived overseas for a certain period of time look forward to their return with great anticipation. However, their anticipation may quickly turn into disappointment, frustration, or isolation as they experience a "reverse culture shock." The repatriation of overseas families into the domestic social environment has a profound impact on the family members.

Why is readjusting to life in one's home country sometimes even more difficult than moving to a foreign country? Assumptions can be made, but few definitive studies have previously been conducted.

Sojourners are likely to expect difficulties and new challenges in adjusting to the foreign environment. However, they are unlikely to expect to have difficulty

re-entering the home environment. In Koehler's words (1986), "Once 'back home,' life again will be perfect and problem-free" (p.90). Overseas, the home country environment becomes irrationally glorified, all difficulties and problems are forgotten and only the good things back home are remembered (Koehler, 1986). Most people are quite unprepared for the adjustments they will have to make upon return to their home country and often do not know how to cope with them. What the sojourners built themselves up for in coming home just is not there when they return. This discrepancy intensifies the re-entry problems—re-entry shock comes as a jolt to most returnees because it is totally unexpected. In addition, there is an unanticipated sense of loss and isolation resulting from lack of current behavioural understanding of the repatriates' home country (Harvey, 1982).

Most people who have resided outside Japan inevitably find that they are somehow different from people who have not had that experience. They have seen different ways of life and habits, attitudes and points of view that their compatriots have not. Although the degree may vary, some returnees experience mental changes as a result of living abroad. Those who have learned the lesson of culture shock are no longer the same innocent people they were when they first left home (Kohls, 1986). Certain characteristic styles of behaviour and thoughts may be developed in people who have lived overseas (Werkman, 1986:7). Meintel (1973:47) argues that the most significant potential for shocks in a strange culture arises from self-discovery. Because of this questioning of self and one's own society, when sojourners come back from overseas, they see their home country in the same way as a foreigner does. Meintel (1973) suggests that the revelations about oneself and the new perspective of one's own society and of persons in it challenge

previously held conceptions. This may cause the disorientation and sense of isolation upon re-entry.

It was unclear whether these arguments were rationalisations of a "reverse culture shock" or were truly explanatory or causal. Nevertheless, it seemed both logical and appropriate to consider using them as a starting point for formal research and through them explore whatever factors might be influencing readjustment difficulties and processes of returnee wives.

1.3 Perceived Justification for Studying the Phenomenon

1.3.1 Repatriation adjustment

There have been many attempts to explain the intercultural adjustment process in a foreign environment (e.g., Bochner, 1972; Cleveland, Mangone & Adams, 1960; Hull, 1978; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960; Torbiorn, 1982). Much of the previous research describes the adjustment of the sojourner along a temporal dimension represented by a U-curve function, which describes the sojourner's adjustment as a function of time in the new culture—initial euphoria, followed by a trough, followed by a period of stabilisation and recovery (Lysgaard, 1955). Whilst a variety of studies have contributed much to the understanding of the adjustment problems of foreigners in a different culture, much less has been written about the *reacculturation*—the process of readjusting to one's home culture after an extended sojourn abroad (Martin, 1984). Whereas culture shock and entry transitions have been well documented in the literature, the re-entry transition

has received much less attention. Reverse shock, i.e., the disorientation which characterises the sojourner's return home, has received scant theoretical treatment (Meintel, 1973).

Although several attempts have been made to define the issues associated with sojourners' re-entry problems, (e.g., Adler, 1986; Adler, 1981; Bochner, 1977; Brislin, et al., 1986; Brislin & Van Buren, 1974; Clague & Krupp, 1978; Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Harvey, 1982; Meintel, 1973), the reality of the "reverse culture shock" that greets the returning sojourners upon re-entry is often underestimated. The studies dealing with re-entry transitions suggest that 're-entry shock' is as powerful as culture shock and that it causes more upheaval than the demands of the initial cross-cultural adjustment. For example, in her examination of the re-entry process of corporate and government employees, Adler (1981) found that re-entry into the original culture was found to be a more difficult transition than the initial move to the foreign culture. Meintel (1973) also indicates that returning sojourners feel it more abruptly and acutely than the shock of entering the strange environment (p.52). Frequently, the re-entry problems are greater than the initial transfer problems (Loewenthal & Snedden, 1986). If the migration is permanent, a major cross-cultural problem might have been solved, however, when people have been temporary, transient residents and return from the foreign culture to their native culture, they will soon discover that their cross-cultural problems are far from over (Freedman, 1986).

Although several theoretical approaches to repatriation adjustment have been tested deductively with foreign students (e.g., Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Gullahorn

& Gullahorn, 1963) and business expatriates and their spouses (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1991), this study offers another approach to adjustment after an overseas assignment by using a qualitative research methodology to enhance the existing accounts: Do findings from this study confirm or contradict conclusions drawn from previous studies? Does this case yield additional insights that enhance the theory of repatriation adjustment?

In short, there have been relatively few studies of the adjustment of the returnees to their home country, the permanence of the effects of the sojourn, the effects of the sojourners on their hosts, and the effects of the returnees on their own country (Brein & David, 1971:215). Having considered these issues, it was assumed that the study of returnee wives might provide an opportunity to further investigate the relationships between the critical variables, such as the degree of integration into the host culture, associated with re-entry adjustment. The results from this study will contribute to the small body of literature related to re-entry adjustment and the effects of the difficulties on returning sojourners.

1.3.2 Wives' problems

Most studies of the psychological and social effects of mobility have focused on groups that make up only a small proportion of the people who move—such as corporate executives returning to their organisations, international students coming back from studying abroad, and the Peace Corps volunteers returning to the U.S.A. As Austin (1986) states, re-entry problems can apply equally to young and old, male and female, and persons in all types of overseas

affiliation—corporate, governmental, educational, or religious. Although the extent to which an individual exhibits disorientation differs, the re-entry process demands much of those who have spent a certain period of time outside their home country.

Despite the fact that the problems from which returnee sojourners suffer are common for everyone who has experienced crossing cultural boundaries, very little has been studied regarding the wives of overseas employees, and the effects of returning and readjusting to their home culture. Occupational maladjustment among returnee employees, mostly fathers (e.g., Adler, 1976; Harvey, 1982), received as much public acknowledgement as the educational problems of returnee children. However, re-entry problems of the spouses (mostly wives) of corporate personnel have been ignored or undervalued and received little attention from academic researchers.

Upon their re-entry, returning employees of multinational companies may experience difficulties returning to their Japanese organisations. As White (1988) states, their absence from the workplace marks them as an outsider. However, most of them come back to a familiar job in a familiar environment. In Sobie's (1986) words, "Men have their built-in support group". On the other hand, for the wives accompanying their husbands, overseas transfers may mean leaving everything they have and know behind (relatives, friends, children's schools, and often their own career prospects). Upon re-entry, they often feel left out by the other wives who have remained in the home country. Returnee wives seeking employment have to start the job-hunting process all over again. Re-entry

problems exist for accompanying wives more often than for husbands, since the expatriated employees have the work environment which offers a cultural continuity and a sense of belonging. For any accompanying wives residing abroad, coming home requires major personal and social adjustment.

In Japan, the problems of returnee children have come to public attention since the mid-1970s (Goodman, 1990:1-3). It has been widely accepted that something must be done to help them in readjusting to Japan's educational system (Goodman, 1990:4). As White (1988) states, the readjustment problems that receive the most public attention involve children and fathers in school and the work place. Empirical studies of returnee wives are few (e.g., Isa, 1996; Muto, 1994; White, 1988), whilst the importance of returnee children's readjustment has been well documented (e.g., Goodman, 1990; Ishida, 1983; Kato, 1986).

Unlike their children, Japanese parents do not develop identity confusion during their overseas stay as they perceive themselves clearly as Japanese nationals living for a temporary period of time outside their homeland (Enloe & Lewin, 1987). Several studies showed optimistic views of the way in which returnee wives manage their readjustment to Japan. Most returning wives give the impression of making a good readjustment to Japan, as social pressures may inhibit personal acceptance of this stress. Difficulties in coping with the problems of moving are often regarded by society as personal inadequacies and inabilities. Returnee wives' re-entry problems may have been slow to surface.

Martin (1984:130) suggests that there is a need to investigate various types of

sojourner groups in order to gain a better understanding of the re-entry process. Past researchers have examined several issues relating to repatriation adjustment problems (e.g., Adler, 1981; Clague & Krupp, 1978; Harvey, 1982; Murry, 1978; Tung, 1988); however, most of these studies have focused on repatriation problems as identified by corporate executives returning from their overseas assignment. Church (1982) points out a variety of methodological problems in the investigation of readjustment problems including: overgeneralisation from limited sample sizes and national groups and the predominance of studies dealing with American sojourners or persons from other cultures sojourning in the United States.

As business people returning from working abroad (e.g., Adler, 1981; Black & Gregersen, 1991), and students and scholars (e.g., Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) have been more frequently studied, one contribution of this study may lie in its use of returnee wives as subjects since too little is known about their unhappiness and hardships after returning to their home environment. In this respect, this study tries to examine the whole experience of returnee wives upon re-entry from their husband's foreign assignment and present empirical evidence on, what White (1988) terms, "the crisis of return" of wives. This is an important issue and is the main justification for studying returnee wives. It is hoped that by comparing the experiences of different informants, the study can shed light upon different patterns of difficulties encountered and the methods of coping with these used by Japanese returnee wives during their re-adaptation process in Japan.

In summary, as far as this particular study is concerned, the researcher's claim to

have contributed something new in spite of all that has already been researched rests upon the following considerations:

1. The research conducted in the past has dealt overwhelmingly with the situation as it affects the United States, involving foreign students studying in the U.S.A. or American returnees coming back from other parts of the world. This study attempts to expand our understanding of repatriation by focusing on the readjustment process of Japanese returnee wives, and by examining the significance of various factors influencing the process by obtaining data from repatriated Japanese wives.

2. This study is directed towards the consideration, in the light of data obtained, of certain hypotheses that have emerged from previous research studies and to an indication of how true these hypotheses appear to be among the Japanese returnee wives. To anticipate what will be discussed more fully in the later sections, the findings of this study may also provide a critical understanding of issues relating to repatriation adjustment and may serve to generate alternative hypotheses for further research.

1.4 Research Questions

By using an interview study approach to compare and contrast the experiences of different informants, this study seeks to explore different aspects of the returnee wives' readjustment difficulties. Three main general questions are proposed, which reflect the two considerations of the overall research rationale mentioned

above. The subcategories of the main questions are also proposed in order to verify the results of previous studies and to identify hypotheses to explain the differences between the returnee wives' attitudes to readjustment and their situations.

The main research questions

1. What are the specific problems of reverse culture shock experienced by returnee wives?
2. The intensity of readjustment problems may vary among the individuals. How do the various situational and/or attitudinal factors affect the extent to which individuals exhibit difficulties?
3. How do they cope with the readjustment difficulties? What sort of strategies do they use to deal with the problems?

Subcategories of the main research questions

1. Backgrounds: Are there any differences in their readjustment difficulties due to their backgrounds and situational variables?
2. Willingness to move abroad: How do their attitudes towards international moves affect their re-entry transitions?
3. Integration into the foreign culture: Is there a relationship between the degree of adjustment to the host culture and the degree of readjustment to their old culture?
4. Value change as a result of living abroad: How do the changes arising from their experience abroad (e.g., new attitudes and behaviour) influence their re-entry

adjustment?

5. Readjustment difficulties: What were their main areas of difficulty after returning home? How did they cope with the problems? How does the specific nature of Japanese society influence their readjustment in the home environment?
6. Thoughts about being a company-wife: How do the degrees of involvement in the company-wives' work and career affect their readjustment problems and difficulties? What are their ideas about the significance of their own work and career?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Most of the studies on re-entry crises focus mainly on the identification of the problems sojourners experience after they return home. Usually they fail to investigate how intense or serious returnees feel those problems are and whether or not they are coping adequately (Gama & Pedersen, 1977). In this work with the returnee wives, it will be possible to identify certain problems that appear to be common to most members of the group and investigate the complexity of the "problem" issues, going beyond the investigation of the mere presence or absence of readjustment problems.

To achieve the aim of trying to assess factors that might affect their repatriation adjustment and attempt to answer the above research questions, the objectives of this study are:

1. To make explicit the repatriation experience and the meaning of the experience of the spouses, i.e., Japanese returnee wives who have returned from a period of overseas stay, and to identify the readjustment problems likely to arise on their re-entry when they seek to readjust to the Japanese lifestyle.
2. To define factors which appear to positively or negatively influence their degree of readjustment stress.
3. To suggest an alternative approach to aid understanding of the experiences of "reverse culture shock" by examining the accuracy of existing accounts of cross-cultural adjustment (e.g., the concept of "culture shock", curves of adaptation, or coping style).
4. To examine coping strategies used by the returnee wives, whose re-entry problems differ, depending to some degree on their circumstances.
5. To facilitate awareness of the adaptive ways of dealing with re-entry difficulties and to provide multinational companies, supporting networks and the women themselves with the knowledge to develop recommendations to promote changes in repatriation support programmes. If the returning sojourners recognise some of the potential repatriation problems, it will help to reduce their stress and increase effectiveness during their re-entry process. The development of such a critical awareness may be another justification for conducting this study.

1.6 Implications of the Study

1.6.1 Implications for the re-entrants

Some Japanese multinational organisations do prepare their employees—and to a lesser extent the families of employees—for what greets them in terms of culture, attitudes, way of life and language in a foreign environment. In some cases, the spouse may have received expatriation training and thus was prepared for problems and stress during the foreign assignment. As Martin (1984) indicates, sojourners are likely to expect difficulties and newness in adjusting to foreign environments, whilst they are unlikely to expect to have difficulties re-entering their home environments. Sojourners usually assume, "We're home, aren't we? Now we can relax." Most returnees do not expect the reverse culture shock syndrome and often do not know how to cope with it.

Many returning wives have not yet considered that the repatriation may cause psychological and social problems. However, upon re-entering their native culture without adequate preparation, people are likely to discover, much to their surprise, that they cannot simply pick up where they left off (Freedman, 1986:23) and experience an unanticipated "reverse culture shock".

Studying the various factors affecting the repatriation adjustment of returning sojourners will facilitate awareness of the nature and continuing demands of re-entry and the adaptive ways of dealing with "re-entry shock". Since this study is conducted for the people it studies, it is expected and hoped that the results will enable them to be prepared for readjustment pressures after their move home. The result provided by this study allows returning women to know what to expect when they return to their home environment.

1.6.2 Implications for multinational companies

In view of the prevalence of international assignments in today's Japanese business operations, multinational organisations must approach the repatriation adjustment of overseas employees and their families seriously. Employers are all too aware of the fact that stress resulting from relocation to a foreign country can have a significant impact on an employee's work and his family life. However, the lack of attention either to the re-entry problems experienced by family members or the social and psychological problems confronted upon repatriation is a significant shortcoming of many corporate programmes (Harvey, 1989). Companies and returning expatriates alike seem to turn a blind eye to this [repatriation] phase (Fontaine, 1986:47).

Because of the relatively high number of employees on foreign assignment for Japanese multinational corporations, one would expect to find particular attention being paid by these companies to the specific problems faced by expatriates upon their return to Japan. However, this does not appear to be the case. Many companies ignore the reality of the "reverse culture shock" that awaits the overseas employee and his family on their return to the home office and the home country.

To overcome many of the challenges of relating to an international move, it is hoped that companies will be responsible for making the transition from the home to the host country and from the host to the home country as smooth and painless as possible. The results of this study will provide Japanese multinational

organisations with a much greater understanding of the problems faced by returning employees and their families.

1.7 Selected Qualitative Research Method and Justification for its Potential

In the past, the methodology chosen for major studies of cross-cultural adjustment has been of the 'scientific' paradigm. There has been a tendency towards the study of variables involved in a situation, by using questionnaires having a grading or scale marking system for statistical analysis, and by trying to rigidly control all other variables, rather than taking a more holistic approach. A study that aims at finding a group of predictors of the degree of adjustment, or at verifying a certain model of cross-cultural adaptation (e.g., culture shock, curves of adjustment, coping style, etc.) may need to employ a multivariate approach on a large number of subjects in order to obtain realistic and representative results. However, resources were not available for the present study in sufficiently large numbers.

Relocation is an emotive subject. It involves transferees moving away from their familiar locations and starting afresh somewhere new. Relocation involves people. It often causes anxiety and generates a great deal of stress in the personal lives of those affected. Numerous personal and social variables are interwoven in affecting the returnee's re-entry transition. It was evident in the literature reviewed that the relationships between cross-cultural adjustment and the affecting variables are not simple and linear. Considering that the knowledge and perspective change which this study wishes to generate are about giving meaning to the thoughts and

feelings of returnee wives, the task of this study is to elicit and interpret the meaning and reasons which participants give to their experiences. It seeks to describe how returnee wives cognitively, effectively and practically translate their overseas experience and the experiences in their lives after return. The lack of literature and paucity of previous studies relating to re-entry adjustment also made this inquiry descriptive and exploratory in nature.

Consequently, an interview approach was used as the main research methodology. It was assumed that an interview method would make possible the search for this kind of complex, holistic pattern among the people concerned, not in a statistically significant but a psychologically significant way. At no stage was this study intended to be a large-scale questionnaire-style survey. It was to be a detailed in-depth study of a relatively small sample which will enable all the interviews to be conducted by one person. The result of such a concentrated analysis of a small sample will not of course provide evidence for any large-scale generalisations but will provide a comprehensive picture of how the readjustment process is experienced by the returnee wives. It is hoped that this attempt to develop interpretations and alternative hypotheses may lead to further and more systematic comparisons of general relevance.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

This first chapter presents some of the researcher's early thoughts and concerns regarding the readjustment problems faced by Japanese returnee wives. This chapter also outlines the perceived justification for studying the phenomenon.

The aims and objectives of the study, i.e., what it wishes to accomplish, are stated, and the important implications and relevance for cross-cultural adjustment study are demonstrated. A brief overview of the method chosen for this study, which will be elaborated in Chapters 3, has also been included in this introductory section.

Chapter 2 starts with a review of the existing literature to define and describe several concepts relevant to this study, e.g., acculturation, re-acculturation and re-entry. It will then outline the specific nature of Japanese society, such as the cultural values of conformity and homogeneity that might make readjustment even more difficult. Thirdly, it will provide background information on the subjects, i.e., Japanese company-wives, necessary to understand the context of this study. The overseas experiences of those wives before re-entry will also be described briefly in this section. Fourthly, it will examine possible readjustment problems of Japanese returnee wives. Fifthly, it will discuss conceptual frameworks and related theories in this area, and their application to readjustment study. Several important differences between the processes of acculturation and re-acculturation are also stated in this section. Finally, factors that may influence re-entry or the readjustment process will be discussed, leading to the formulation of the hypotheses to be tested.

Chapter 3 details the rationale for choosing the method, the underlying philosophy and methodological orientation adopted for the study. The background of the method, as well as the outcome and importance of this type of method will be explained. Thus, a major part of the chapter will be devoted to the description of the main research method employed to explain the foundations for this study. This

chapter will also focus on the application of the method to this study, i.e., how the method will be used in accomplishing the aim of the study. It will describe the design of the study, the process of choosing the participants and the assessment and administration procedures used in this study. The difficulties and limitations experienced during the fieldwork and the issues of reliability and validity will be discussed.

The remaining chapters will present the findings from the empirical work conducted and the analysis of the data.

The first section of Chapter 4 will provide descriptive information about the respondents and their families during and after their overseas sojourns. In the next section, the results of the interviews focusing on the returnee wives' readjustment problems will be discussed. The next section, the second part of the data analysis, will examine how various factors, such as situational factors and attitudinal variables, have influenced the returnee wives' readjustment.

Chapter 5 will reflect on some of the main themes in the returnee wives' readjustment experiences emerging from the research. The approach taken in the examination and discussion will seek to focus on the specific nature of Japanese society, which is characterised by social and cultural homogeneity and conformity. This chapter describes the extent to which human relationships specific to the Japanese culture put pressure on women returnees by examining areas such as group distinctions and membership identification, 'pollution' issues as a result of living abroad and marginality. This chapter will also present coping strategies

used by the returnee wives, who exhibited the problems to different degrees depending on their circumstances.

Chapter 6, the final chapter, will review the initial aims and rationale behind the study. The main findings from the analysis regarding the identified readjustment difficulties, the factors which affect the degree of readjustment difficulties, and the returnee wives' coping strategies to deal with the re-entry stress will be summarised. The reasons why the returnee wives have experienced readjustment difficulties will also be addressed. This chapter closes with the conclusions of the study, a discussion of the limitations of the study, and suggestions and recommendations for future studies. An examination of implications for multinational companies and organisations and for returnee wives will be made in the last part of this chapter.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 2 starts with a review of literature to define and describe the principal concepts relevant to this study, i.e., acculturation, reacculturation and re-entry. The specific nature of Japanese society, such as the cultural values of conformity and homogeneity that might make the returnees' readjustment even more difficult, will then be stated. Background information on the subjects—Japanese company-wives and returnee wives—necessary to understand the context of this study, will be provided. The overseas experiences of those wives before re-entry will also be described briefly in this section. Then the existing conceptual frameworks and related theories in this area, and their application to readjustment study will be discussed. Several important differences between the process of acculturation and reacculturation will also be stated in this section. Finally, factors that may influence re-entry or the readjustment process will be discussed, based on previous re-entry researches.

2.1 Definitions of Reacculturation and Readjustment

As Martin (1984) indicates, re-entry must be viewed in the larger context of *cultural adjustment.* Sojourners migrating to a foreign society interact with its culture, i.e., its way of life expressed in group norms, customs and values, languages and shared experiences or history. They adapt to the majority culture and adjust accordingly. Thus, as Brislin (1981) stated, the subjective component of cultural adjustment involves sojourners' feelings of comfort—a feeling that one is "at home", and refers to the integration of personality with culture. Objective

indicators of cultural adjustment refer to judgements by hosts that the sojourner is aware of appropriate behaviour, is able to maintain cordial relations with host people, and, in general, knows how to "behave like one of us" (Brislin, 1981:283). Thus, cultural adjustment can be conceptualised as a psycho-social process focusing on the attitudinal and emotional adjustment to the host culture (Martin, 1984:116) and the establishment of group ties with the host people.

The classical definition of *acculturation* was presented by Redfield et al.(1936) as "comprehends those phenomena which result when groups or individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). In early studies, acculturation was considered as a cultural adjustment characterised as *culture shock* (Martin, 1984:116). Oberg (1960) is generally credited for having introduced the term in one of his earlier articles. He defined culture shock as "an occupational disease of people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad. And it is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960:177). According to Cushner (1990), culture shock implies "a disorientation that occurs whenever an individual moves from his or her immediate, known, comfortable surroundings to an environment that is substantially different" (p.102). Moving to a foreign culture makes our surroundings unfamiliar. People will lose their familiar cues and will be confronted with unfamiliar situations.

Recent approaches have viewed acculturation in a larger context and focused more on the contents or outcomes of the psychological and socio-cultural changes as a

result of contact between individuals and a host society (Smith & Bond, 1998:271). Anderson (1994) notes that acculturation is "a commonplace process of learning to live with change and difference" (p.299). Therefore, acculturation or cultural adaptation may be related to general adjustment to changes and constitutes just one type of 'transition experience' (Bennett, 1977).

Expatriates and migrants who successfully complete their acculturation process and then return home will experience a reverse culture shock in readjusting to their old cultural environment (Hofstede, 1994:211). Adler (1981) defines *readjustment* as the transition from a foreign culture back into one's home culture, which is the experience of facing previously familiar surroundings after living in a different environment for a significant period of time (p.343). Jansson (1986) views re-entry as "the process that occurs when the individual attempts to return to the social system of which he was once a part", and applies the label 're-entrant' to broader categories of people such as former offenders or mental patients, the veteran who has clung to his "war ethic" in peacetime, and a Peace Corps volunteer who has adopted the values and customs of the host country (p.50). Brislin et al.(1986:16) refer to the demand to make readjustment to original environments as *re-entry shock*. Perry (1986) describes returnees' re-entry experience as "seeing of the familiar through eyes grown foreign" (p.73) and re-entry shock occurs "when the eyes are still alien, and the country seems strange but it is yours" (p.77). Re-entry shock is an often unexpected and sometimes painful experience of readjusting to life in one's home country after living in a foreign country (Koehler, 1986).

Whenever there is change or move, adjustment is needed. Therefore, *reacculturation* or *re-entry* can be conceptualised as another type of adjustment which sojourners face upon their return to their own culture. While reacculturation is the specific anthropological term, "re-entry" has been used by scholars in a variety of disciplines examining the readjustment of sojourners to their home environment (Martin, 1984:116). Thus, reacculturation, readjustment, and reintegration will be used interchangeably in this study.

One might expect repatriation to be a relatively straight-forward undertaking, but the situation that confronts the returning expatriate can in fact require big adjustments on both personal and professional levels (Torbiorn, 1982:40). Many studies have found that the experience of reintegration is often difficult, especially for children (e.g., Goodman, 1990; Tamura & Furnham, 1993; White, 1988; Yoshida, et al., 2002). Although older returnees have received much less attention, there have been several studies to identify the re-entry difficulties of students and corporate business people. For example, Gama and Pedersen (1977) examined the experience of Brazilian students returning from a stay in the United States. They measured the extent and nature of the re-entry difficulties reported by the students. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) investigated the experience of returning American scholarship grantees and identified professional problems for older grantees and more personal/social problems for younger grantees. Harvey (1989, 1982) focused on issues relating to the repatriation of expatriates and examines the problems associated with re-entry to the domestic environment and the organisation. In a comprehensive study of American managers and their spouses, Black and Gregerson (1991) found that greater adjustment difficulties

were experienced by younger people, those who had spent more time overseas and those whose social status and housing conditions had declined. Difficulties were experienced at work, and in reintegrating with home nationals and into the general environment.

2.2 The Re-entry Experience for Japanese Nationals: the Specific Nature of Japanese Society

2.2.1 The specific nature of Japanese society

> "A porch for removing shoes is found at the entrance of every Japanese home. It marks clearly the distinction between *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) worlds."
>
> — Joy Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society*. (2003:48)

Eventually, most overseas families return to their own culture. But this often causes great anxiety and difficulty. It is strange to think that going back into one's home country, which is so familiar and comforting, may actually make one uncomfortable.

Much literature (e.g., Adler, 1981; Brislin, 1981; Brislin et al., 1986; Harvey, 1982; Martin, 1984; Paige, 1990) suggests that 're-entry shock' is as powerful as culture shock and that there are many issues associated with reintegrating into the home society. For example, Brislin and Van Buren (1974) reported several critical incidents that returning students encountered back home such as jealousy on the part of colleagues, friends' indifference to their intercultural experience, and

return to close supervision by their parents. Brislin (1981) states two of the most common problems facing returnees as follows:

1. Sojourners are excited about sharing their experiences, but none of their old friends or family members want to hear about them.
2. They realise they have changed but cannot explain how or why. Because of their disorientation and the reactions of others, returning sojourners often seem to be rather unpleasant, feisty and lacking in social graces (Brislin, 1981:131).

Not being able to share their foreign experiences with friends, neighbours, or relatives seems to be one of the common problems for any individual moving between cultures. In addition, as a result of the overseas experience, having seen another way of life and learned new values and attitudes, the sojourners return as different people. On returning from overseas many people view their home country through a more critical lens. Thus, returnees often find themselves not feeling a part of life at home. This, in turn, leads to alienation and depression. These fundamental problems are commonly shared among people coming back from overseas, whether business families, international students, or Peace Corps volunteers.

Crisis of return is not unusual for anyone returning to their home country after spending a certain period of time abroad, as Uehara (1985) says, "in any culture which is different from the culture of the returnee there is the possibility of the experience of returnee culture shock" (p.175). However, it should be noted that although many similarities do exist, differences in readjustment problems also

seem to exist. These may depend on the home country to which they are returning, as well as the host country from which they have come.

Several studies (though there is a predominance of examination of American returnees) suggest that there are unique cultural patterns which would give the returning sojourners specific readjustment problems attributed to the unique nature in a given home society. For example, Corey (1986) focuses on young nationals of Saudi Arabia, one of the world's most conservative developing countries, who return home with a PhD from American universities. American educators and their foreign students see the re-entering foreign student as a "bearer of technological and cultural light" from the United States. Their ideal is to move Saudi Arabia into industrial utopia and out of the cultural backwardness characterised by ignorance and superstition (p.155). However, the cruel dilemma confronting returnee students is that they must "wear blinders to the cultural problems" around them. Corruption and incompetence are the accepted modes of operation and direct criticism is culturally taboo, they must "give up any plans to tamper directly with the cultural life of the country" (p.155-6). He suggests the same conditions apply throughout the countries in the Arabian peninsula. Corey's (1986) illustration presents how cultural conservatism in the home country often produces an intolerable personal tension, frustration, and bitterness among the returnee students.

Drawing on her family's overseas re-entry from Scotland along with interviews with several American returnees, Sobie (1986) described the returning experience of American returnees as coming home to a "smorgasbord", a "shallow and plastic",

and "materially possessive" society. Pearson (1964) and Stolley (1965) also examined returning crises of American Peace Corps volunteers. The volunteers reported difficulty in readjusting to the affluent lifestyle in the United States, resulting in role conflict and feelings of aimlessness of disillusionment. Sidey (1986) also described his own readjustment problems on coming back again to the affluent American society, and questions the meaning of affluence by drawing on his experiences in China.

Gama and Pedersen (1977) have identified readjustment problems likely to arise among Brazilian scholars when they return from a period of graduate study in the United States. In the United States, subjects were exposed to different lifestyles and worked in a setting where many facilities were available. They returned to Brazil to work in universities which are academically, economically and socially very different from the American ones. The majority of returnee Brazilian scholars reported difficulties adjusting to their work settings. Most of the returnees reported a lack of facilities and materials to a greater or lesser extent. They also complained of little or no intellectual stimulation and too much administrative red tape. All of these problems have created frustration among the returnees (Gama & Pedersen, 1977:55-6).

The adjustment problems of returnees are not specific to Japanese returnees but are common to any individual moving between different cultures; re-entry stress is normal. However, the effects of living outside the home country, even for a short period of time, seem to be particularly difficult for Japanese returnees trying to reintegrate back into their social circles of friends, co-workers, and people in the

community. For example, Kobayashi (1982a) examined overseas children from different types of countries: 1) the smaller European nations (such as the Benelux countries) and England; 2) the United States, West Germany and France, and; 3) Japan, returning to their own home countries. Although Kobayashi (1982a) found that West Germany had systematic education for returnee children, he concluded that the situation of returnee children was not generally considered to be as problematic, and was not taken as seriously as it was in Japan. The perception of the experiences of Japanese returnee children as seriously problematic is pervasive among the general public in Japan (p.38-9).

Thus, one important question concerns the extent to which these problems of readjustment can be ascribed to the fact that the Japanese returnees are returning to Japanese society rather than to any other (Goodman, 1990:170).

As illustrated in Enloe and Lewin's (1987) study of the reintegration and readjustment of Japanese returnees, the relative homogeneity and tightness of Japanese society is generally considered to be a source of difficulty in the re-entry process of these returnees. A discussion of the tight-loose dimension of culture was first presented by Pelto (1968). In tight cultures, people are expected to behave according to norms, and there is very little tolerance of deviation. Loose cultures give people a good deal of freedom to deviate from the norms. Hofstede's (1980) "uncertainty avoidance" dimension has much in common with the degree of "tightness" in the culture. In Hofstede's (1980) conceptualisation, Japan has been described as the prototypical tight culture, where people constantly worry about behaving as the norms of the culture specify. A probable antecedent of tightness is

cultural homogeneity. The homogeneous nature of the Japanese people can be found in almost all literature regarding Japanese society.

Hofstede (1980) also distinguished national cultures on the basis of individualism-collectivism dimensions. According to his conceptualisation, the Japanese are found to be collectivist, other-centred, and willing and ready to sacrifice their own interests for the well-being of collectives such as the nation or society at large. Therefore, as Hofstede (1994) says, "Integration across cultural dividing lines in collectivist societies is even more difficult to obtain than in individualist societies" (p.212).

Similar to the distinction between individualism and collectivism, in his classic work, "Clan, Caste, and Club", Hus (1963, cited in Shimahara, 1979) defines two types of society—centripetal society verses centrifugality. The first type is characterised by the convergence of individuals within a group such as a clan. Mutual reliance is the central orientation and thus, individual desires are subordinated to the needs of the group. The second type is marked by the self-reliance of the individuals, who diverge, rather than converge in their pursuit of freedom. Japanese society is classified as a centripetal and situation-centred society (Shimahara, 1979).

As Goodman (1990:61) states, the idea of a collectivist Japan as opposed to an individualist West is one of the most common themes in works on Japan and has been illustrated well in the work of the anthropologist Nakane (1970). Her thesis is that social position in Japan is decided by an individual's 'frame' (*ba*), which

means 'location', "but the normal usage of the term connotes a special base on which something is placed according to a given purpose" (p.1). The Japanese concept of group refers to the social organisation and emphasises the frame, in Nakane's term, which constitutes its boundary and the common identification by which its members are bound and seek social and personal anchorage (Shimahara, 1979:21). This frame is more important than the individual's personal attributes (Nakane, 1970:2-3). According to Nakane frame is a locality, an institution or a particular relationship which sets a boundary and binds a set of individuals into one group (p.1).

Attribute may mean, for instance, being a 'sales manager'. In contrast, being a 'man of X Company' expresses the commonality of frame. Attribute may be acquired not only by birth but also by achievement; frame is more circumstantial. The criteria of frame serve to identify the individuals in a certain group, which in turn are classified within the whole society (Nakane, 1970:2). The tendency of the Japanese to stress situational position in a particular frame, rather than universal attribute, can be seen when they socially introduce themselves to another person. Japanese people are likely to say (to use Nakane's (1970:2) own example), 'I belong to S company' rather than saying, 'I am a filing clerk'. They tend to give precedence to institution over occupation. In the same way, among university graduates, what matters most, and functions the strongest socially, is not whether or not a man holds a PhD but rather from which university he graduated (Nakane, 1970:3). As Nakane (1970) points out, such group consciousness and orientation fosters the strength of an institution. The strong sense of group identity may lead to its exclusive nature and the development of a clear distinction between inside and

outside, and individuals without a 'frame', such as returnees, are marginalised in Japanese society, are essentially without a social identity and may find themselves socially excluded (Goodman, 1990:62).

One aspect of Japanese society and culture which is given special attention in this study is the pattern of Japanese behaviour resulting from the frameworks within which the groups function. Japanese people are often defining themselves in reference to other people, or to some group (Hendry, 1987:49). As argued by several writers (e.g., Nakane, 1970; Shimahara, 1979), the group is fundamental to all aspects of Japanese social, economic, political, and educational behaviour. It constitutes the pervasive basis of contemporary social relations and mediates the relationship between individuals and their larger society. Thus it is vital, not only in a functional sense, but also as the general framework that defines an individual's personal identity and social participation (Shimahara, 1979:21). Group-oriented Japanese society may impose pressure on individuals to conform to group norms and expectations.

In her examination of rituals of purity and impurity in societies, Douglas (2000) argues that pollution beliefs create symbolic patterns in the culture and express a general view of the social order. According to Douglas (20002-6), a system of classification associated with notions of dirtiness and cleanliness is deeply held in a society. Although Japanese examples are notably absent from the illustrations used by Douglas (2000) to develop her argument in pollution ideas, as Valentine (1990) points out, a concern for purity and the dangers of impurity would seem pertinent to Japan (Valentine, 1990:38). The distinction between *uchi* and *soto*

(translated roughly as 'inside' and 'outside') is an example of such a deeply held part of the system of classification in Japanese society (Hendry, 2003:47).

As suggested by Nakane (1970) and Valentine (1990), Japanese perception of social relations involves two separate worlds: *uchi* (colloquial form of *ie* or household) and *yoso* (colloquial form of *soto* or the world outside one's own group). The Japanese use the expression *uchi* to mean the place of work, organisation, office or school to which they belong (Nakane, 1970:3). The *uchi* world is often perceived as intimate, supportive, and protective, whereas the *yoso* world is comparatively alien, unkind, and hostile (Shimahara, 1979:24). White (1988) also states that the governing concept of Japanese group membership is the idea of the *uchi*—the preservation of a homogeneous island identity which reflects the long cultural tradition of inside-outside distinctions. The *uchi*, characterised by conformity or close adherence, will act as a defence against outsiders, such as those Japanese who have crossed a geographical border and a social boundary. According to her theory, once Japanese are contaminated by the 'impure' outside world and acquire some of its values and norms, they lose some of their Japanese 'purity' and are marked as 'different' (White, 1988:105-19). A person on the borderline is subject to doubts about the possibility of truly/fully belonging (Valentine, 1990:39), thus, as is suggested by Douglas (2000:103), "their double loyalties and their ambiguous status in the structure with which they are concerned makes them appear as a danger to those belonging fully in it" (2000:123). The designation of individuals as belonging inside (*uchi*) or outside (*soto*) is especially crucial in Japanese perception of social relations.

The basic argument explaining the exclusive nature of Japanese society runs something like this: because of its racial homogeneity and geographic isolation, along with a long period of isolation from the outside world (*sakoku jidai*), a unique language and a set of cultural values and norms have developed, which in turn have encouraged an island mentality and an intrinsic tendency to maintain internal cohesion (Goodman, 1990:58). Warm, intimate relationships are maintained only among *uchi* (inside or home) group members, and the group closes its doors to outsiders. It is therefore not surprising that the Japanese have an innate sense of suspicion towards anything or anyone entering the society from outside. In Hofstede's (1994) term, "What is different, is dangerous" (p.208).

The Japanese people's attitudes towards foreign experience is complex. As Enloe and Lewin (1987) pointed out, most Japanese assume that the geographic isolation and supposed racial homogeneity of Japan make it a unique culture. This is true in one sense, since every culture is unique, although very few societies are completely homogeneous. But implicit in the Japanese notion of culture is the belief that their culture is uniquely homogeneous and advanced, and therefore can be completely understood only by those who have participated totally within it (Enloe & Lewin, 1987:245). Thus, any Japanese who has been exposed to foreign cultures and has become too familiar with them is thought to be in danger of having lost his pure 'Japaneseness'. Such is clearly the case for anyone returning to Japan after living abroad. In his discussion of the uniqueness of the Japanese way of looking at outsiders, Joseph (1993) described the Japanese returnees as holding peculiar positions. He stated that the Japanese who have lived abroad are "ostracised by their countrymen when they return because they have apparently lost their

'Japaneseness', that quality that makes the Japanese stand out as a unique and generally superior race" (p.150).

Kondo (1984) used the historical features and cultural values of Japanese society in his own account of how these cause culture shock for anyone entering the society from outside (p.119-60). Returnees form a minority, and this fact is much more obvious in Japan. The fact that those residing overseas or returning to Japan are different, or are perceived as different, is important (Goodman, 1990:58). As several previous studies have pointed out, the nature of Japanese society which is generally characterised by conformity, homogeneity, harmony, groupism, and exclusivity can function against anyone coming from outside. These cultural values place a premium on excluding 'unusual' people. Goodman (1990) says, "an understanding of the values of Japanese society has therefore been seen as essential in explaining the 'problems' of returnees" (p.59). White (1988) also clearly states that the specific Japanese returnee problems are strongly influenced by the basic cultural values and principles of organisation in Japan; the exclusive nature of Japanese society and how this exclusivity has prevented the reintegration of those returnees who have interacted with the outside world. The ambivalence shown by Japanese society to those who have returned from overseas and the readjustment difficulties in reintegrating into the social circles upon re-entry can be partly related to and understood by the cultural explanation; understanding the cultural values and norms, and historical and psychological legacy of Japanese society is vital to an understanding of some of the problems faced by Japanese returnees.

2.2.2 Japanese families today

A brief overview of a typical middle-class Japanese family today will help the reader understand the role of the mother-housewife and the relationships the family forms with outside groups—the relationships into which the returnee wives must reintegrate.

1) Husband-wife relationships

The traditional Japanese family was organised as a hierarchy with the husband as head of the household, in a position of absolute authority over the others. In the past the family served as the unit of economic production, socialisation of children, and the source of an individual's status in the community (White, 1988:4). This demanded strong loyalty and obedience. However, Western culture and values have had a large influence, inspiring post-war legal reforms and general social changes. The old distinctions between eldest and younger sons, and between sons and daughters, have decreased (Ida, 1998:3). Women, less restricted to the home, are freer to pursue education, jobs, and hobbies (Ueno, 1991). The typical Japanese family today is a nuclear family, comprising a mother, a father, and their children (Ida, 1998:1).

In contrast to the traditional families, today a woman's relationship with her husband is much more important than her relationship with any of his relatives. Most young women, influenced by Western cultural values, want more companionship from their spouses (Ida, 1998; Iwao, 1991) and do not enter marriage only to wait for their husbands at home as their mothers used to do

(Itamoto, 1990). Nevertheless, with the development of modern work patterns leading to a division of labour, where men work away from home and women are consigned to the family sphere (LeBlanc, 1999:15), most couples now settle into a pattern of having separate social worlds after a few years of marriage. The husband's life is absorbed in his company; most of a husband's waking hours are spent at work. He works and socialises with his work colleagues. In order to work long hours however, husbands need to have a well-established home ground which allows them to concentrate on their work. This requires a complete division of labour between husbands and wives, and the social norm, "a man works outside the home and a woman works inside it", has not been drastically changed yet (Yamato, 2000:1-2). The wife centres her life on home, children and neighbourhood. She becomes absorbed in her mothering role and her social life revolves around her children but may include relatives and friends.

The husband nominally heads the family and bears clear responsibility for financial support (Yamoto, 2000:2). However, far from being a strong authority figure, he is more likely to let his wife take effective charge of everything concerning the house and children; within the home the wife's authority is great. The division of labour gives the housewife autonomy in her own sphere (Ueno, 1991). She is effectively in charge of family finances as well as housekeeping, child raising, and educational planning.

2) The role of the mother-housewife

Modern technology allows housewives to spend less time on household work; time is now available to pursue part-time jobs, hobbies, or activities like sports or

participation in volunteer and community-services. Despite these changes, the essential nature of the housewife's role remains the same. The majority of women keep to the traditional ideal of "the good wife and wise mother" (*ryosai kenbo*) (Koyama, 1991; LeBlanc, 1999). The Japanese still call a wife *okusan* (referring to someone else's wife) or *kanai* (referring to one's own wife), both terms meaning the one inside the house. Her primary roles as a housewife are located inside the family; she works for the family (*uchi*) and is defined by it (Yamato, 2000:2).

Though they are gradually changing (e.g., Makita & Ida, 2001), socially acceptable female's roles are, first and foremost, household management and secondly child raising including education. Being a housewife is still the most widely expected and most socially approved role for a Japanese woman. The housewife identity is still one of the most powerful frames on many Japanese women's social experience (LeBlanc, 1999). Kunihiro (1993) explains that, although the contents of women's daily lives have changed considerably in the post-war period, the label of *shufu* (the Japanese word for housewife) remains inescapable for most married women because the basic division of labour underpinning society's view of women as home-centred has not changed.

It is to the mother-housewife that all important domestic decisions and budget matters are referred. In general the responsibilities for the house, children, and community activities are hers. Imamura (1984) found that housewives have some specific opportunities for community participation that follow from their housewife roles. Some activities outside the home, such as the school parent-teacher association (PTA), are almost unavoidable. The mother is also a

bridge to the neighbourhood, ward offices, volunteer citizens' groups, local street cleanup teams, the retail trade, and other families (White, 1988:5).

A returnee wife may be very much less "in control" of her family's outside relationships than a woman who has never had to cope with being away. Her role as a mother is strongly affected by the strains the Japanese educational system places on her children. Her role as a member of the community is influenced by her community's perception towards the family as re-entrants or even foreigners.

3) Child raising and education

Motherhood and the careful nurturing of children are valued as supremely important in Japan. Mother and child are usually inseparable when the child is young, and even in later years the mother-child relationship continues to be the closest within the family. Not only is the raising and education of children the responsibility of the mother, but it is a role that cannot be replaced by others.

Most Japanese husbands leave the education and disciplining of their children entirely to their wives (Christopher, 1983). A Japanese father's relationship with his children depends largely on the nature of his job. A white-collar worker in a major city may seldom be home during a young child's waking hours; typically he sees his children only during weekends and leaves them exclusively in their mother's care throughout the week (although some younger urban fathers are now taking a more active role in daily childcare).

One of the major tasks commonly given to mothers in Japan is the management of

their children's education. In order to assure a child's success in the future, the mother must devote much time and thought on his or her education. Those who are keenest on pursuing this goal are often called "education mummies", which is not intended as a compliment. However, many middle-class mothers conclude that they feel they have no choice in the matter.

4) Attitudes towards working women

Economic growth has produced an increase in the number of women in the work force, especially the number of older married women, but these are overwhelmingly employed in part-time or temporary positions only. The Equal Employment Opportunity Law for Men and Women, which came into effect in April 1986, and was revised in June 1997, provides that employers must make an effort to offer women equal opportunities for employment and promotion and that they are prohibited from dismissing women employees who require maternity leave. The law, however, lacks sanctions against employers who fail to comply. In 1990, 40.7 percent of the total number of persons employed by all branches of industry in Japan were women (Japan Information Network, 2001).

Yet even now large Japanese enterprises still maintain discriminatory employment systems (Kōedo, 2001). Women continue to do mainly non-professional and menial jobs, and their wages are still lower than those of men for equivalent roles and duties. The majority of women are expected to enter the labour force even today as a supportive labour power. Most working women are expected to, and do resign from their jobs for marriage or at the latest when the first child is born. Also, a high percentage of women occupy part-time and

temporary positions. The percentage of male and female irregular or part-time workers among all working income-earners was 16.2 percent in 1985, and this figure grew to 24.5 percent in 1999 (Japan Information Network, 2001). In terms of gender, male part-timers represent 11.0 percent of the total male work force, while female part-timers, at 45.0 percent, represent a large and rapidly increasing proportion of the female work force. Women's employment opportunities, though improving, are still constrained by custom and culture.

Women want to work for a variety of reasons. These may include the additional wages gained to increase the family's ability to pay for better housing, better education for the children or personal luxuries. Some better-educated women want to work in order to pursue careers of their own. Nevertheless, the ideal for most women seems to remain a life at home with the children. Strong moral feelings seem to be displayed in attitudes towards working women. A woman receives social approval if she is clearly working for the welfare of the family. However, the woman who works for her own interests is likely to be considered selfish, or at least insufficiently devoted to her family. Work outside the home is usually presented inside a "good wife, wise mother" perspective that tends to reinforce a woman's identification with the housewife role (LeBlanc, 1999:31).

It should be noted however, that most young women's attitudes towards work and marital life have been changing drastically, influenced by Western cultural values. Japanese women today seek more explicit communication with partners in their marital life (Iwao, 1991) and the sharing of domestic chores and responsibilities (Itamoto, 1990).

2.3 Who are the Japanese Company-wives?

2.3.1 Definition of the Japanese company-wives

Overseas expansion has been one of the most important economic vehicles for Japan since the 1960s. This expansion involves the international transfer of funds, technology, and products. Japanese direct investment abroad began expanding rapidly in the mid-1970s, with its sharpest increase in the United States. Due to the increasingly international affiliation of the Japanese economy, more and more employees and their families have been posted overseas over the last three decades. For example, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs statistics, in 2000 there were approximately 111,900 employees of Japanese companies and their family members living in North America alone. Japanese employees who are asked to temporarily relocate themselves and their families to another country—*chuzaiin*—have been a growing phenomenon ever since the Japanese economy began to take off from the late 1960s (due to the recent economic crisis in Japan, the number of Japanese overseas employees has been gradually declining since 1995). Here in the U.K., in 1995, some 17,000 employees of Japanese companies and their family members were stationed in the Greater London area (Consulate-General of Japan at London, 1995).

These overseas employees form a significant group for research on Japanese returnee children, since they are the children of 'prolonged' or 'long term' overseas Japanese residents who stay overseas for more than three months (Goodman, 1990:18). Nearly two-thirds of all 'long term' residents overseas are involved in

trading, banking, and manufacturing industries (Ministry of Education, 1988). The Japanese overseas employees can be categorised as belonging to a well-educated section of Japanese society, where the employees (husbands), generally in mid-career, have been posted overseas by the companies for which they work. The majority of them take their families with them (Goodman, 1990:22-23).

Company-wives are essential elements in the *chuzaiins'* international transfers. As stated in the introductory section, Japanese company-wives can be characterised by their overseas experience. During the overseas assignment period, there are some obvious manifestations of the wives' involvement with their husbands' organisation and role expectations as company-wives. They are expected to support their husbands' careers and motivate their achievements overseas. They are the wives of corporate businessmen whose upwardly mobile careers have moved them geographically for certain periods of time overseas.

In her examination of corporate wives' gender role attitudes, Andersen (1981:311) refers to the term "corporate gypsies", which denotes the central pattern in corporate families—frequently moving as their husbands are transferred from one job to another. Kanter (1977) describes corporate wives by saying, "corporate wives were part of the organisation...supporting their husbands' careers and motivating their achievements" (p.104-6). Seidenberg (1973) refers to the corporate wives as the "helpmates"—the wives who come along for the benefit of their upward-reaching husbands (p.1-11). The above studies and others (e.g., Weissmen & Paykel, 1972; White, 1988; Wyse, 1970) have examined the major elements of

the definition of company-wives. In this study, it is suggested that the definition of company-wives and returnee wives includes all Japanese wives who have accompanied their husbands during work assignments in a foreign country, and because of their husbands' international transfers, have at some time in their lives spent a relatively long term (usually three to five years) overseas. They then return home after their husbands finish their assignments abroad.

2.3.2 Public images of *chuzaiin* and company-wives

From the restart of the Japanese economy in the late 1960s until the level of investments abroad intensified in the mid 1970s, an overseas assignment became a normal part of a career in international business. Many employees who pursued careers in multinational companies may not have questioned the need for such a transfer. Those selected for overseas transfers were considered to have an international expertise and to possess special skills and knowledge. Being selected as a *chuzaiin*—an international employee who is sent overseas by his company to carry out duties—used to mean that he was at a certain point in climbing the organisational ladder to the top. *Chuzaiin* who entered middle and upper management and were sent overseas to work, had been seen with mixed feelings of admiration and envy. They fared far better in promotion than any other groups in the organisation. An overseas posting was regarded as a challenge and it often lead to an improvement in their professional position and career advancement. In addition, Japanese expatriate managers may have enjoyed the freedom of being away from corporate bureaucracy, and the opportunity to do business in an international setting.

In addition to their elite status in the workplace and the possible professional benefits, if one takes into account the quality of life in central Japan, with its overcrowding, high living costs and other urban problems, and the high value of the yen during this period, a posting abroad also gave access to a better standard of living. Being posted overseas as *chuzaiin*, especially to North America and Europe, guaranteed a higher standard of living than Japan could offer. Although the situation in developing countries was different, a "colonial" lifestyle in those countries might have been another source of the Japanese public's feelings of envy. Many overseas families employ servants in the household, whereas the possibility of having such help would be rare for them in Japan.

However, as Japan's economy has increasingly participated in international business, more employees and their families have been posted overseas. Consequently, as the number grows, *chuzaiin* do not seem to hold the same elite status as before. In fact some overseas employees have started to view postings outside Japan as a misfortune. In his examination of the repatriation of executives, Harvey (1982) states that one of the contributing factors in the reluctance to go abroad is the ambiguity that surrounds the executive's career upon repatriation. Most *chuzaiin* now worry about being left behind in home office promotions. Their absence from the workplace marks them as outsiders. Their career paths are at risk even though they were sent overseas by their company to promote and maintain its success in the international market. The problems of returning home also make executives reluctant to go abroad. *Chuzaiin* generally know that international returnees will find themselves in structural, cultural and relational isolation in the workplace.

Japanese overseas employees also worry about what will happen to their children when they return home. Their biggest personal concern is the education of their children (Ishida, 1983:74-5). The problems of non-adaptation for *kikokushijo* (returnee children) have lately been of interest to the popular press. As Goodman (1990) suggests, some TV programmes put forward a strongly negative image of the experience of *kikokushijo,* and the same story can be found in major media all over the world (p.57).

Despite these adverse factors, the public image of *chuzaiin* as those who make up an elite class, have not changed very much yet. Serving abroad with their husbands is generally interpreted as a favourable turn of events for most company-wives. The company-wives accompanying their husbands overseas are thought to be better off than their domestic sisters in many ways. There is a generally accepted public view that the advantages of living in a foreign country outweigh the disadvantages. They are the wives of successful and potentially successful men. They are affluent and live in traditional marriages in which their husbands provide their economic security, and they have the chance to live in a foreign country where the living standard may be higher than that of Japan.

2.3.3 Expected roles of company-wives: the 'corporate flower'?

Most Japanese companies and organisations demand that their workers conform to certain ideal qualities which those employers consider to be important. As Goodman (1990) suggests, the ideal male worker is "one who is prepared to sublimate his individual desires and ideas to the company ethic" (p.76-77).

According to Goodman (1990) the ideal female worker is "a worker who will cheer up the workplace by her presence (the 'office flower') and who will leave when she gets married and becomes (*a*) a wife who provides a comfortable home for her husband to relax in after work and (*b*) a mother who will ensure that her children (male or female) become the ideal workers of the next generation" (p.76). These images of the ideal female worker are reflected to a fairly high degree in the institutional demands placed on Japanese company-wives while they are abroad. The law of our times expects the wife to follow her husband according to his desires and needs (Seidenberg, 1973:11).

Those who occupy senior posts in the overseas operations of companies are generally men, often husbands. As Torbiorn (1982) indicates, one distinguishing feature of the wife's situation is that her stay in the host country is motivated by her husband's service there (p.38), which will define some special feature of the role of a company-wife. This role includes the role of 'housewife', as they will rarely have the opportunity to do paid work, sometimes because of the restriction of a work permit or because her previous professional qualification does not meet local requirements, sometimes because of cultural obstacles to women working.

Another new role for women posted overseas is what Torbiorn (1982) calls 'personnel administrator' or hostess. As an overseas family generally acquires a higher social status in the host country than it is accustomed to at home, wives will be expected to conform to what is 'suitable' conduct for a company-wife having a particular social standing in the host country. In addition to managing their households and their children, they are supposed to entertain local company VIPs

and travelling executives from Japan, sometimes acting as hostesses to help their husbands entertain customers and business travellers from Japan either in the office or at home. In addition, they must support their husbands' overseas careers by listening to their problems, providing encouragement, and motivating their achievements (Kanter, 1977:108). If they are in one place for any length of time, they will also gain longevity status, which entails additional responsibilities for helping and instructing corporation newcomers in their new homes (Seidenberg, 1973:30). Company-wives abroad are more deeply involved in their husbands' careers. As Seidenberg (1973) points out, their overseas lives are too integrated into the company. Matters of social life and entertaining as well as dress and manners come under greater scrutiny (p.30).

Papanek (1973) discusses the "two-person single career" phenomenon, which arises from the combination of formal and informal institutional demands placed on both husband and wife. She argues that certain expectations of the wives serve the dual function of reinforcing the husband's commitment to the institution and of demanding certain types of role performance from the wife which benefit the institution in a number of ways (Papanek, 1973:853-6). Their devotion and loyalty to their husbands' corporation seems to make company-wives engage in the work of promoting the company's image and prestige.

2.3.4 Overseas experience of company-wives: double isolations

All definitions of successful cross-cultural adjustment include a component of good relationships with hosts (e.g., Ruben & Kealey, 1979). Brislin et al. (1986) clearly

state that very few people can have a successful sojourn without extensive interaction with hosts and good interpersonal relationships with them. However, crossing the cultural line—to interact with the hosts, going beyond superficial exchanges—is not easy. As Cleveland et al. (1960) state in their study of overseas Americans, in most societies, especially in the underdeveloped areas, it is extremely hard for sojourners to develop activities that truly cross the cultural line. Inability to speak the local language may be the major reason preventing them from having anything beyond casual or elementary exchanges with the hosts. Very often, hosts live in an already well-established network of friends and do not go out of their way to welcome strangers. In addition, the duration of their overseas assignments—usually three to five years—does not allow them to put down deep roots in the local community. Thus, their opportunities to participate in the local life are very limited.

Previous researches (e.g., Hofstede, 1994; Munton et al., 1993; Seidenberg, 1973; Torbiorn, 1982) broadly agreed with the conclusion that expatriate spouses (usually wives) tend to feel more socially and culturally isolated than their working partners. While a husband is involved in a demanding career as a representative of a company, his wife is often left without the support of relatives or close friends in an alien culture in which she has little work to do and little opportunity to pursue a career outside her home (Werkman, 1986:8). In comparison with her husband and her children, who have natural areas of contact with the host community at work and school, the wife runs a greater risk of becoming socially isolated (Torbiorn, 1982:40). This sense of loss and isolation may lead to the feelings of anxiety and depression discussed in relation to culture

shock.

Having to move away from traditional sources of support, i.e., friends and relatives, they may feel helpless and an increased dependence on long-term residents of their own nationality. The typical strategy employed by many expatriates in coping with an unfamiliar environment is to cling to their own culture and group. According to Brislin (1981), people are comfortable associating with others who have the same background, dialect, values and shared memories of the past. These relationships can become very strong and can be very significant in the functioning of the ethnic community (p.114). For example, in their study of overseas Americans, Cleveland et al. (1960) pointed out the tendency of Americans to live in clusters abroad. They describe "American communities" as reflecting the pluralism of American representation—the missionaries see a good deal of each other and very little of the other Americans; the bankers and large businessmen form another group; the small commercial people cling together; and the civilian government officials live in an embassy-led social system (p.58-61).

Similarly, Japanese expatriate wives cope with unfamiliar environments by clinging to Japanese culture and relating only to Japanese people. Many of them live in communities consisting entirely of Japanese overseas corporate families. Although these families might have lived in diverse backgrounds before their departure to the foreign country, during their overseas assignment period, most corporations provide them with a higher standard of living—including housing, cars and children's schools—than they could afford in the domestic environment. Japanese overseas corporate families tend to live in similar houses in a

concentrated Japanese community. They comprise members with similar ages to other expatriate families and have similar lifestyles.

Since the wives' performance in these little societies can also be a measure of achievement for their husbands' advancement, it is more important to get along with the other Japanese corporate families than to integrate into the local people. As White (1988) reports, Japanese company-wives' social contacts were excessively limited by their husbands' occupations. Bankers' wives, for instance, were *doubly isolated*—firstly from the local population and secondly from non-banking families in the Japanese overseas community (p.75).

The company-wives of colleagues may socialise with one another, which sometimes limits their Japanese contacts excessively to their husbands' occupations and children's schools. Another examination of Japanese returnees, conducted by Enloe and Lewin (1987) found that Japanese families who evaluated themselves as less integrated into the local communities reported that they tended to associate much more with other Japanese, either business associates or families with children in the same supplementary Japanese schools, than with host nationals. A preliminary study of the Japanese company-wives living in the Greater London area undertaken in 1997 also seems to support this image of a closed community. Most subjects congregated in several areas in London known to be Japanese communities (nearly 90% of the respondents lived in either N, NW or W postcode areas), and tended to stay within their own networks.

There are some wives who take advantage of their new environments.

Particularly in the United States or Europe, although few take jobs because of the visa restrictions, they may develop new hobbies and become aware of the educational opportunities that are readily available to them. However, as White (1988) describes, the situation in developing countries, where the Japanese communities are more insular, may be quite different. There, they will get used to a "colonial life style". They may have a household of servants to direct, who may be the only local people they know well. They may very rarely use language other than Japanese (p.74). White (1988) also found that Japanese company-wives were more immersed in the society and culture of advanced nations than of developing ones (p.75).

For the overseas families, torn from their native land, the multinational company and networks organised by fellow countrymen become communities within which needs are met and security gained. As Seidenberg (1973) indicates, the natural disorientation of living in a foreign country inclines families sent overseas to turn even more to the corporation as a community substitute (p.29). As some Japanese company-wives often proudly identify with the husbands' companies/corporations, membership of a company-wives network can have a number of implications (e.g., sense of belonging, participation in their husbands' work, prestige and status), all of which could result in a sense of attachment. While most overseas Japanese children experience fundamental confusion generated around issues of identity, it is generally believed that parents tend to retain a sense of Japanese identity (Minoura, 1981) through their membership of the Japanese networks and identification with the husbands' companies.

2.4 The Theoretical Approaches to Re-entry

2.4.1 Conceptual frameworks for intercultural adjustment

Church (1982) undertook an analytical review of some 300 citations on the psychological adjustment of relatively short-term visitors or sojourners to new cultures and defined four different approaches to the theory of re-entry: stage theories; curves of adjustment; coping styles; and culture learning. In addition to these four approaches to sojourner adjustment, Martin (1984) describes a more recent perspective, that of intercultural communication. Brein and David (1971) state that common approaches to describing and explaining the sojourner's adjustment include: culture shock; curves of adjustment; personality typologies and traits; background and situational factors; and social interaction between the host and visitor. However, their assumption is that the effective exchange of information, that is, communication, is considered as being crucial to the sojourner's successful adjustment to an intercultural experience (p.216). They tried to interpret adjustment within the broad framework of intercultural communication along with a variety of factors that may be seen to influence the process of communication. Koester (1983) also suggested a communication perspective on the re-entry process and provided a framework in which change and an awareness of change in communication are interpreted as results of the sojourners' intercultural experiences. More recently, Sussman (2002, 2001, 2000) proposed a new predictive model exploring the relationships between self-concept, cultural identity and cultural transitions. Sussman (2000) tried to provide an explanation for several unanswered questions and contradictory findings from

previous theoretical models of repatriation transitions.

In this section the different approaches identified by Church (1982) and some of the recent conceptual frameworks will be discussed, first for sojourners' initial adjustment in the host culture and then for their re-entry adjustment.

1) Stage theory

Some researchers have portrayed adjustment as a series of sequential stages. In his literature reviews of sojourners' psychological adjustment, Church (1982) starts with Oberg's (1960) description of 'culture shock' and refers to the stages of adjustment that sojourners go through in the host culture, i.e., *stage theory*. Oberg (1960) described four stages: a "honeymoon" stage characterised by fascination, elation, and optimism lasting from a few days to six months depending on how soon real everyday coping and communication with the new culture must begin; a second stage characterised by hostile and emotionally stereotyped attitudes towards the host country and increased association with fellow sojourners; a *recovery* stage characterised by increased language skills and an ability to get around in the new culture; and a final stage in which adjustment is about as complete as possible and is characterised by increased sensitivity, understanding and appreciation for the host culture.

Smalley (1963) also proposed four stages of culture shock: 1) a stage of fascination in which there are various barriers preventing social interaction with the hosts; 2) a stage of hostility which occurs as the permanency of the residence develops; 3) a stage of improved adjustment, with an expression of humour and lessening of

tension; and 4) a stage of bi-culturalism, in which the sojourner develops an understanding of the host culture and acts in accordance with its norms.

Adler (1975) presented an alternative view of culture shock and examined the adjustment of the sojourner as a transitional experience, reflecting "a movement from a state of low self-awareness to a state of high self- and cultural awareness (p.15). Adler (1975) defined five stages of transitional experience delineating progressive changes in identity and experiential learning: 1) the initial "*contact*" phase; 2) the "*disintegration*" stage; 3) the "*reintegration*" phase; 4) the "*autonomy*" stage; and 5) the final "*independence*" stage (p.16-20). Outlined in Adler's stage model is the view of the cultural-adaptation process as a learning, self-development and personal growth experience. His transitional model implies that those who have reached the final independence stage would be capable of undergoing further transition, and he suggests a possible framework for the development of training and simulation strategies to prepare people for adjustment.

The readjustment of the sojourners to the home culture can be described in similar stages or phases to those of adjustment to the host culture. For example, Asuncion-Lande (1980) suggests four "distinctive patterns of response" to re-entry shock: excitement; re-establishment/frustration; sense of control; and re-adaptation (p.4). Anderson (1994) calls this approach a "recuperation" model with culture shock as its pivot point but suggests that these recuperation models present particular problems. According to Anderson (1994), the term *culture shock* is vague and over-generalised, and "it has been applied to an extensive range of

situations, to everything from marriage to desegregated schooling to corporate reshuffles" (p.297). She states, "the common denominators have much less to do with culture than with radical environmental change coupled with unfamiliarity" (p.297). Church (1982) also suggests that stage models have inherent conceptual and methodological difficulties, such as the order of stages and the problems in creating indicators for each stage for classifying individuals, as they may vary with culture of origin or be indicative of more than one stage (p.541-42).

2) Curves of adjustment

Rather than conceptualising adjustment in discrete phases, other researchers describe the sojourner's adjustment as a function of time in the new culture. Much of Oberg's (1960) work follows Lysgaard's (1955) seminal study of Norwegian Fulbright students in the United States, which first introduced the concept of the *U-curve* of adjustment—initial euphoria, followed by a trough, followed by a period of stabilisation and recovery. Another typical description of the hypothesised U-curve pattern of attitudinal change is that by Selltiz and Cook (1962), which examines the factors influencing the attitudes of foreign students towards the United States.

The U-curve hypothesis was extended by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) into a *W-curve* of adjustment, taking into account the effect of returning to the home culture. The W-curve is essentially an extension of the single U- curve to a double U-curve (Brein & David, 1971:216). A second U curve, encountered on return to their home environments, similar to that experienced abroad (Church, 1982). Gullahorn and Gullahorn's (1963) data concerning the experience of returned

American grantees after studying in various countries around the world indicate that they undergo a reacculturation process in their home environments similar to that experienced abroad. They suggest that as the sojourner has been exposed to new ways of thinking and behaving, the return home causes experiences including intense feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration, isolation, and alienation. This is followed by a gradual rise in emotional adjustment, as the individual becomes reacculturated. Although Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) suggested that re-entry adjustment also follows the U-shaped curve, Adler (1981) found that the moods of returning expatriates follow a "flattened" U-shaped curve. The initial high period during re-entry is very short, and therefore, the low period begins earlier in the re-entry than in the entry transition (p.344-45).

The W-shaped curve may provide a good way of examining sojourners' readjustment experiences as it depicts the period of "reverse culture shock" upon re-entry. However, the W-shaped curve has an uncertain existence (Brislin, 1981:281). Other scholars (e.g., Klineberg and Hull's study (1979) of the long-term experiences of foreign students and sojourning professors) could not find sufficient evidence for a W-shaped curve. As Brislin (1981) and Becker (1968) have pointed out, one possible explanation may be related to the time of data collection; sojourners are now better prepared for adjustment difficulties. Another possibility may be due to individual differences i.e., not all sojourners begin the sojourn with a "honeymoon phase" or with a period of elation and optimism (Becker, 1968). The degree and duration of the adjustment for an individual sojourner may depend on a number of variables, and there may be a great deal of variability among individual curves of adjustment (Brein & David, 1971:216). Sewell and Davidsen

(1956) stated that language facility, social interaction with the hosts, previous contact with other cultures, and personality characteristics may affect the degree to which a sojourner passes through the various phases of the W-curve.

The universal validity of the curve approach itself is dubious (Anderson, 1994:297). Becker (1968) also doubts the applicability of the U-curve pattern of adjustment by saying that the U-curve proposition "may be a valid characterisation of the western European or Scandinavian student in the United States, but may not apply to the majority of students from underdeveloped countries...both on theoretical and empirical grounds" (Becker, 1968:433-41). Pool (1965) reported that among foreign students to the United States, those coming from countries that are relatively more similar to the United States, that is, other Western nations, differ in their adjustment patterns from those students from countries less similar to the United States, that is, Asian or non-Western nations (p.217).

In addition, as Church (1982) suggests, although curves of adjustment suggest a within-individual longitudinal adjustment process, almost all of the data on which these descriptions are based are cross-sectional. The individual's adjustment patterns and responses do follow curves, but given points on the curves occur at such different times, that the curves' description becomes so flexible as to be meaningless (p.542-43). U or W curve models of adjustment require longitudinal research that examines psychological and socio-cultural dimensions over time in the same individuals. There is little empirical evidence for such a standard course, nor for fixed times when such variations will occur. Furnham and Bochner (1986)

stated that "There may be something salvageable in the U-curve hypothesis, but more sensitive, complex, longitudinal research will need to be done to determine either its existence or usefulness, and this work will need to be placed more firmly within a general theoretical framework" (p.132).

3) Coping style

Another approach to conceptualise cultural adjustment is called *coping styles.* This approach describes adjustment in terms of an individual's typical sets of behaviour or social patterns, and personality characteristics and traits. There may be a limited number of alternatives that a sojourner may choose from to cope with a foreign environment, and once the different social response patterns have been determined, a fairly accurate description of the social behaviour of any sojourner is possible (Brein & David, 1971:219). A consistent dimension emerges in these typologies representing, at one end of a continuum, those types who are more traditional and conservative, to those less conservative and more involved in social interaction with host nationals. The former are likely to have adjustment difficulties, the latter adjust easily to the host society. Between these two extremes are individuals who represent a more integrative approach to the new culture, who are more open to the host culture but who integrate new behaviour, norms, and roles into the foundation provided by the home culture (Church, 1982:543).

Berry (1990) generated four varieties of acculturation based on sojourners' attitudinal typologies—the degree to which an individual or group wishes to relate to the host culture: 1) "Assimilation" - when an individual does not wish to maintain his or her identity (original culture) and seeks daily interaction with the

host society; 2) "Separation" - when there is a value placed on holding onto one's original culture, and a wish to avoid interaction with others; 3) "Integration" - when there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, together with a move to participate as a integral part of the larger social network; and 4) "Marginalisation" - when there is little or no interest in cultural maintenance, or in relations with other groups (Berry, 1990:244-46).

Schmitz (1994) found that among a group of immigrants to Germany, stress reaction styles were related to a person's preferred acculturation strategy. Using the Grossarth-Maticek and Eysenck's Psycho-Social stress inventory (1990), the "Approach" style was positively related to a preference for Assimilation, "Avoidance" to Separation, "Flexible" to Integration, and "Psychopathology" to Marginalisation. In Sewell and Davidsen's (1956) study, the sojourners have been characterised according to individual personality differences in adjustment as: 1) the "detached observers"; 2) the "promoters"; 3) the "enthusiastic participants"; and 4) the "settlers". They also stated that these patterns of adjustment are related to the sojourners' perceptions of roles and their expectations in respect of returning home.

Bennett, Passin and McKnight (1958) described three types of Japanese in the United States focusing on personality variables in adjustment: the "adjuster" who can adapt and assimilate to both cultures; the "constrictor" who remains conservatively Japanese wherever he is; the "idealist" who is open to cultural change. Nash and Shaw's (1963) analysis of Japanese immigrants in Cuba is another examination of three personality types—the "autonomous", the

"traditional", and the "transitional" and shows similarities to the work of Bennet, Passin, and McKnight (1958).

Lundstedt (1963) discussed the importance of personality factors in a sojourner's adjustment. He maintained that a closed mind and ethnocentrism may limit the attainment of effective overseas adjustment, and that the more effective coping mechanisms in adjustment include rational attitudes, universalistic tendencies, open-mindedness and flexibility. Gardner (1962) also described the "universal communicator" as having a well-integrated personality, a central organisation of an extroverted type, a value system that includes the "value of all" , a socialisation of cultural universals, and a high degree of sensitivity towards others. Thus, the universal communicator will have the least difficulty in adjusting to life in another country. More recently, the "multi-cultural" (Adler, 1977) or "mediating man" (Bochner, 1977) has been described as having cultural sensitivity, cultural relativism of values, cognitive flexibility, and a pattern of identity which allows him/her to adjust to and serve as a link between multiple cultures.

There are several researches that have examined re-entry adjustment in terms of styles of coping. In her examination of the re-entry experience of returned Peace Corps volunteers and returned corporation personnel, Adler (1981) suggested similar patterns of adjustment, or coping styles for returning sojourners. Adler (1981) points out that previous research has been inadequate in its emphasis of potential growth as an important aspect of the re-entry experience. She states three styles of coping with the re-entry experience: the "proactive" who experiences the most growth and sees the uniqueness of the situation of being

between two cultures and is primarily influenced by internal stimuli (similar to 'internal locus of control' by Rotter, 1966); the "alienated" who has a high need for external validation (similar to 'external locus of control' by Rotter, 1966), who fails to recognise the uniqueness of being between two cultures, reacts negatively to the home environment and experiences little growth; and the "re-socialised" who also has a high need for external validation and fails to value the uniqueness of the transition period, but responds positively to the home environment, trying to fit back into its culture.

White (1988) divided her sample of Japanese corporate returnees into three groups on the basis of their strategies to cope with the re-entry process (p.98-102). They are the "reassimilators" who try to reassimilate into their group as decontaminated insiders; the "adjusters" who adjust their cosmopolitanism to a more domestic style while accepting a somewhat marginal position in their firm; and the "internationalists" who become permanent outsiders—actively seeking or passively accepting the role of international outsider.

Church (1982) clearly indicated the limitation of the usefulness of these typological approaches by saying, "They are generally based on small samples and single national groups making their generalizability questionable" (p.543). Because of the diversity of these approaches, little common ground exists for making lucid and intelligible comparisons and they seem to ignore the antecedents, backgrounds, personalities, social determinants and behavioural consequents (Brein & David, 1971:222). Such typologies tend to be largely impressionistic, post hoc rather than predictive, and not empirically

cross-validated or related to other sources of data for consistency—they are vague descriptions neither clearly defined nor conceptualised in any comprehensive manner (Brein & David, 1971). There may be as many kinds, and levels of adaptation as there are situations and individuals adjusting. In addition, these behavioural patterns within single individuals may not remain consistent over a period of time (Useem, 1966). Thus the consideration of coping patterns and personal typologies in the conceptualisation of inter-cultural adjustment of the sojourner may have greater value after further investigations of cross-cultural experiences based on larger samples can establish its validity.

4) Culture learning

The culture learning approach is a relatively recent conceptual framework which examines sojourner adjustment in terms of culture learning using operant conditioning and social learning principles (Bochner, 1972; David, 1976; Guthrie, 1975; Schild, 1962). Instead of analysing adjustment as something that occurs inside the person, Bochner (1972) views adjustment as the acquisition, over time, of behaviours, skills and norms that are appropriate to the social roles that the sojourner is required to enact. The rate of culture learning is not uniform across sojourners. Some never learn the new culture nor develop reciprocal role relationships with their hosts, others quickly acquire the social skills of the new society and develop genuine contacts with their hosts, and others stand somewhere between these two extremes (Furnham & Bochner, 1986:133). As Furnham and Bochner (1986) pointed out, these individual differences might explain why the U-curve is not supported in some studies.

According to Adler (1975), culture shock is caused by "an emotional reaction to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture" (p.13). Living in an alien culture, one experiences a loss of approval or reinforcement for many activities that had been approved at home (Guthrie, 1975:108). The "perceptual reinforcement" is the key concept in the cultural learning approach. Church (1982) describes this approach as follows:

> Sojourner adjustment is interpreted in terms of the removal of positive reinforcements (e.g. customary food, approval and other social rewards, friends and entertainment) and the presentation of aversive stimuli (e.g., novel situations, language difficulties, unfamiliar and anxious social encounters). Being placed in a new culture results in new reinforcers, new discriminative and aversive stimuli and changes in response-reinforcement contingencies (p.543).

Bochner's (1982, 1972) 'cultural learning' model states that the major task facing a sojourner is not to adjust to a new culture but to learn its salient characteristics. The concept of "adjustment" has connotations of cultural chauvinism, however, as Furnham and Bochner (1986:14-5) state, culture learning, i.e., learning a second culture, has no ethnocentric overtones, and the model proposes programmes of preparation, orientation and the acquisition of culturally appropriate social skills.

David (1976) suggested the advantage of this approach: conceptualising sojourner adjustment in terms of learning principles implies the possibilities of developing procedures for reducing adjustment problems by transferring home culture reinforcers, developing new reinforcers that are compatible with the new culture,

modelling successful sojourners and vicarious reinforcement. The orientation programmes to prepare sojourners for life and work in another culture, such as the "culture assimilator" (Albert & Adamopoulos, 1976; Brislin et al., 1986; Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), which is based on the presentation of short stories or critical incidents designed to improve the accuracy of the sojourner's cross-cultural attributions, may be useful in helping the sojourner to identify relevant reinforcers, aversive stimuli and cultural differences.

In the view of the culture learning approach to interpretation of adjustment, the re-entry difficulties can be derived from the notion of contradictory role demands. Bochner, Lin and McLeod (1980) report that returning students anticipate that they will be subjected to contradictory social expectations. Particularly, they think that there will be some ambivalence in the treatment they will receive from their professional, peer and family groups. The rate of resolving role conflicts may vary with a number of circumstances and could account for the absence of a W-curve in some studies (Furnham & Bochner, 1986:134).

As Martin (1984) indicated, the culture learning approach has some potential use in terms of assisting sojourners to readjust to their home environments. If the sojourners view the home culture as a new culture and realise that they no longer have the reinforcers developed in the host country, they will understand the need to develop new reinforcers, just as they did in the initial cross-cultural adjustment. Although, returning to their familiar environments provides advantages in culture learning—the returning sojourner is unlikely to expect to have difficulties in culture learning through explicit communication. It may be possible to analyse

sojourners' re-entry adjustment in terms of culture learning principles, by conceptualising the home culture as a new culture where the reinforcers in the foreign culture are absent, and by examining the differences between the positive reinforcements in the host culture and the presentation of change or negative stimuli in the home culture (Martin, 1984).

5) Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication perspectives on cultural adjustment focus on the sojourners' understanding of their host cultures and their employment of strategies for effective intercultural communication (Brein & David, 1971; Martin, 1987; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Studies in this area have suggested that unexpected behaviour and attitudes are frequently causes of misunderstanding and conflict between people of different cultures. Both culture and communication come into play during the communication encounter, when people from different cultures are trying to share ideas, information, and feelings. Research findings have generally supported a relationship between sojourners' use of effective communication strategies and their positive sojourn experiences.

Kim (1988) defined the term and domain of intercultural communication as "...direct, face-to-face communication encounters between or among individuals with different cultural backgrounds" (p.12). Kim's early work in 1977 investigated the communication patterns of immigrants. She characterised acculturation as the phenomenon by which the immigrants came to understand the norms and values, and to adopt the salient reference groups of the host society. In her later work (1992) she redefined her view of acculturation to include the establishment of an

"intercultural identity" for an immigrant, a sojourner, or a business person who successfully integrates with a new environment. Intercultural identity (Kim, 1992) is used to identify an individual's ability to grow beyond their original culture and encompass a new culture, gaining additional insight into both cultures in the process. Kim's (1992, 1988) theories of acculturation and intercultural identity describe communication as the mediating process required to facilitate the transition from one culture to the next.

Support for Kim's perspective that intercultural communication facilitates and mediates acculturation was consistent with Wilson's (1993) finding from his study of the re-entry of high school exchange students. He suggested that there was a clear, inverse relationship between specific communication activities, such as going on walks, outings or evenings with host families or discussing significant issues with people of the host country, and the degree of re-entry satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) experienced. The more frequently students had engaged in these activities in the host culture, the less likely they were to be satisfied with life back home. This result provides evidence that the more that intercultural communication occurred overseas, the more acculturated the student became into the host environment, and consequently the more re-acquaintance and the greater the transition which was required upon re-entry.

Koester (1984, 1983) also presents an intercultural communication perspective on returnees' transitions. Koester's (1984, 1983) approach viewed the sojourners' intercultural communication in the host societies as a way to understand the

impact of their intercultural experiences. According to her assertion, returnees are affected by the intercultural communication experiences of their sojourn after re-entry to their home culture. Sojourners who have lived in a foreign country for more than a certain period of time can adapt to new symbols and new definitions for familiar symbols, both verbally and nonverbally (Martin, 1984). Re-entry is the experience of facing previously familiar surroundings after living in a different environment for a significant period of time. It requires a process of understanding and interpreting the ways that sojourners have changed while they lived abroad. This process occurs through communication with their friends, family, co-workers, and classmates after they return home. Returnees may have a need for validation of their experiences abroad from the people around them with whom they relate. The intercultural communication perspective provides an integrated framework in which change and an awareness of change in communication can be understood as a result of the intercultural experience.

6) Self-discovery/Culture identity

Meintel (1973) challenged the utility of the concept "culture shock" for providing an understanding of the experiences of those who enter unfamiliar cultural settings. According to Meintel (1973), the traditional discussions of culture shock typically focus on the newcomer's problems with a foreign language, strange customs and uncomfortable living conditions, that is, on problems which often constitute the less significant or enduring aspects of the sojourner's experience as a stranger (p.49). By locating the source of difficulties in the strangeness of culture to which the individual must adapt, however, "the intensity of so-called reverse culture shock becomes difficult to explain" (Meintel, 1973:49). He argued that the

most significant potential "shocks" in strangerhood are those of self-discovery, which challenge previous conceptions of self and, by implication, the social world which sponsored them (Meintel, 1973:47).

Several researchers (e.g., Bochner, Lin & Mcleod, 1980; Guthrie, 1975; Pearson, 1964; Stolley, 1965) have elaborated upon "role difficulties". For example, Pearson (1964) and Stolley (1965) described the crisis of the returning Peace Corps Volunteer who had lived for two years in a developing country. The volunteer may have difficulties in adjusting to a change in role. As a volunteer he may have assumed many responsibilities during the sojourn, but, after returning home, may find himself in a relatively ambiguous situation with minimal responsibilities and resultant feelings of disillusionment and aimlessness. The researchers' results indicated that the main problem of re-entry was a concern with the contradictory social demands the sojourner was likely to experience in the three major social networks, i.e., professional, peer, and family groups.

Sussman (2000) has recently proposed a new paradigm focusing on self-concept and cultural identity. Sussman's (2000) Cultural Identity Model (CIM), predicts the repatriation experience in terms of three variables: cultural adaptation, identity change and cross-cultural differences in tolerance for cultural identity variability. She states that "on the individual psychological level, the type and intensity of the repatriation experience is predicated in part, by the level of adaptation to the host culture" (p.113). A key variable in predicting the degree of cultural adaptation is the degree to which a sojourner identifies with both the home country and the host country, that is, the sojourner's cultural identity.

According to Sussman (2001, 2000), the amount of cultural identity change experienced whilst overseas serves as a mediating variable. Shifts in cultural identity serve as a mediator between cultural adaptation and the repatriation experience.

The Cultural Identity Model (CIM) (Sussman, 2000) is also placed within a contextual framework. Sojourners' cultural identity change is perceived and evaluated against the background of the home culture's perspective on cultural heterogeneity and multiple cultural identities. This seems to be conceptually similar to Pelto's (1968) and Triandis' (1994) notion of loose and tight cultures: in tight cultures, people are expected to behave according to norms, and there is very little tolerance for deviation from norms. Loose cultures give people a good deal of freedom to deviate from a norm. It is also similar to Hofsted's (1980) conceptualisation of an "individualism-collectivism" dimension in cultures.

Sussman (2002) believed that reverse culture shock is mainly due to those changes sojourners made in their behaviour and thinking; the changes that helped them to be more effective in the host country, the changes that led to self-concept disturbance. This predicts an inverse relationship to that described in cultural learning models which suggest a positive association between overseas adjustment and repatriation experience, i.e., the more successful the overseas adaptation, the more skilful one becomes in cultural adaptation and, as a result, the better able to cope with repatriation difficulties.

Sussman's (2000) model suggests that successful adaptation to the host culture

predicts a significant change in one's behaviour and cognition, that is, changed cultural identity. She also states that the effect of successful adaptation overseas would result in a more difficult repatriation period (Sussman, 2001, 2000). She presented the cultural dimension of tolerance for cultural identity change, i.e., the normative level of flexibility for cultural identity variances within the home culture, as one of the critical variables influencing returnees' re-entry experiences.

Meintel's (1973) "self-discovery" approach and Sussman's (2000) Cultural Identity Model bring the experiences of the sojourners abroad and on their return home into a single perspective. This approach may be a promising perspective for understanding the phenomenon of reverse culture shock and one which will be explored in this study, as relatively little has been examined concerning the questioning of self and one's own society as part of the cross-cultural experience.

2.4.2 Similarities and Differences between acculturation and reacculturation

As Martin (1984) stated, there are similarities between the adjustment of the individual to the host culture and his readjustment to the home culture. Whether it is cross-cultural adjustment or repatriation adjustment, one of the primary theoretical frameworks is the uncertainty characterised by a sense of loss of familiar cues, and the integration with a different cultural system. Both processes may be described in terms of stages or phases of adjustment. In fact, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) suggested that the cross-cultural adjustment process that leads to a U-shaped curve of adjustment could also be applied to re-entry adjustment as a W-shaped curve. At the same time, both processes can be

described by categorising individual styles of coping and personality characteristics as a way of understanding individual differences in adjustment. For example, in her examination of the re-entry experience of returned Peace Corps volunteers and returned corporation personnel, Adler (1981) suggests similar patterns of adjustment, or coping styles for returning sojourners. Although Bochner (1972) states that the returning sojourners have advantages in culture learning because of the familiarity with the home culture, both adjustment and readjustment processes seem to involve aspects of culture learning, or culture relearning.

Several researchers (e.g., Adler, 1981; Bochner, 1973; Brislin, 1981) found that most sojourners had more difficulty adjusting back to their home country than they did adjusting to the foreign country and the readjustment process can be seen as another cross-cultural adjustment process. It might seem that readjustment to the home country should be relatively simple (Black & Gregersen, 1991), Black and Stephans (1989) found evidence to show that the expatriate's adjustment—composed of adjustment to the job, adjustment in interacting with host nationals and adjustment to the general non-work environment—would seem to hold direct parallels for repatriation adjustment as well. Black and Gregersen (1991) suggest "repatriation adjustment to be as multifaceted as other cross-cultural adjustments", and "past measures of cross-cultural adjustment with minor wording modifications would be reliable measures of repatriation adjustment as well" (p.674).

However, there are several important differences between the two processes of

acculturation and reacculturation (Martin, 1984:122). Martin (1984) pointed out two differences between adjustment to the foreign culture and adjustment to the home culture: 1) differences in expectation for the sojourner, and 2) awareness of change. These are described as follows:

The first refers to the differences in expectations for the sojourner between the host people and the home people. The sojourner will expect a new and unfamiliar environment when going overseas, and as Martin (1984) says, "members of the host culture will expect the newcomer to experience difficulty and behave differently from native members of the culture". However, the sojourners often do not expect anything unfamiliar when returning to their home culture. Also, "the friends and family of the sojourner are not likely to expect the sojourner to have difficulties in re-entry. As a result, reverse culture shock is increased, as neither the individual nor the social system is prepared for any readjustment difficulties" (Martin, 1984:123). In her examination of the re-entry problem among military families, Koehler (1986) also distinguished between adjustment to a foreign culture and readjustment to one's home culture. When one moves to a foreign country, at least a certain amount of culture shock should be expected, tolerated and understood. When returning home from an overseas assignment, however, one finds that re-entry shock is totally unexpected and is, therefore, difficult to tolerate or to understand (p.90). The underlying belief during the overseas sojourn, even for those who are enjoying their host country experience, is that all problems stem from living in a foreign country: "once back home, life will again be perfect and problem-free" (Koehler, 1986:90).

According to Martin (1984), the second difference between the two processes concerns change and awareness of change. As a result of the adjustment experience in the foreign environment, sojourners are likely to acquire expectation patterns compatible with the host social system, which put them out of phase with their home culture on their return (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Adler (1981) found that increased self-confidence and an improved self-image were the most common personal changes recognised by the returnees. Returning sojourners may have new attitudes and behaviours (a change in self-identity) as well as experiencing changes in the social and physical surroundings in the home culture (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). There will have been changes within the home environment itself during their period of absence. It is not just the amount of change that an individual experiences that is important in the re-entry process but the awareness of the changes that have occurred (Adler, 1981).

2.5 Variables Affecting the Re-entry and Readjustment of Returnees

Previous re-entry researches have examined possible factors that predict the social and psychological outcomes of sojourners' experiences upon their return home. A review of the research on returnees' readjustment shows that certain variables, which may affect re-entry shock and readjustment, appear to be common among the returnees when they reintegrate into their home culture.

2.5.1 Length of time stayed abroad

Previous studies (e.g., Bochner, 1973, Brislin & Van Buren, 1974; Cleveland et al.,

1960) have found that when people live in a culture other than their own for a significant length of time, their attitudes and outlook change. It can be assumed that longer absence from the home culture makes it more difficult to readjust to one's own culture (Lysgaard, 1955). For example, in his study of repatriation of corporate executives, Harvey (1989) concluded that the length of expatriation should be considered as a key variable in the level of disruption experienced by the executives and their families. The level of "reverse cultural shock" is more than likely related to the extent of time spent on the foreign assignment (p.142). Black and Gregersen (1991) reported that total years spent overseas was a significant predictor of both expatriate and spouse interaction and general repatriation adjustment. It is natural to assume that the longer the sojourner remains in the foreign country, the greater the likelihood of problems on re-entry. Other researches on Japanese returnee children (e.g., Minoura, 1991, Takahagi et al., 1982, Tamura & Frunham, 1993) also found that the length of stay abroad significantly affected returnee children's re-entry transitions.

2.5.2 Length of time back home

The length of time since returning to the home country seems to be positively related to the ease of readjustment. Adler (1981) reported that the moods of returning expatriates follow a "flattened" U-shaped curve—gradually adjusting to their home country over a period of time after the initial honeymoon stage (the first two months). As Black and Gregersen (1991) stated, the longer the elapsed time since returning to the home country, the more information the returnees would have acquired through experience. The more uncertainty is reduced, the

greater the repatriation adjustment (p. 676).

2.5.3 Overseas location

Overseas location has been considered as one of the important variables that will affect a returnee's re-entry experience. Harvey (1989) suggested that the degree of cultural dissimilarity in the foreign culture which the expatriate was exposed to during his assignment might influence the level of "reverse cultural shock". In their investigation of factors related to American managers and their spouses' repatriation adjustment, Black and Gregersen (1991) assumed that the novelty or dissimilarity of the host culture will be negatively related to interaction and general adjustment for the expatriates (p.677). According to Black and Gregersen (1991), since the host country has been the sojourner's point of reference during the foreign assignment, the greater the dissimilarity between the host culture and the home country culture, i.e., the greater the contrast, the greater the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the home country on return. As a result, the more difficult will be the re-entry adjustment to the home country culture. Fichtner (1988) showed that the Japanese high school returnees who had lived in Asian cultures had an easier social re-entry than those who had lived in Western cultures.

2.5.4 Location within the host country

Location within the host country is also considered as a variable influencing the readjustment to the home culture. A study of Japanese returnee families conducted by Enloe and Lewin (1987) found that Japanese families who evaluated

themselves as less integrated reported that they tended to associate much more with other Japanese, either business associates or families with children in the same supplementary Japanese schools, than with the host nationals. In her examination of the adjustment of Japanese families living in the United States, Minoura (1981) found that there was an extensive interaction among families either in the same company, or whose children attended the same supplementary Japanese school, to foster a network as a way to sustain their Japanese identity. It is expected that there will be a difference in the readjustment levels between sojourners who have lived in an ethnic community where the home culture is more consistently found and those who have lived in a local community where the degree of social interaction with the host community is greater.

2.5.5 Previous overseas experiences

Whether or not a sojourner has previous cross-cultural experience also seems to influence the degree of readjustment difficulty in a home country. In their research of re-entry experiences, Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) stated that students who had not previously experienced a major geographical move, or a "psychological relocation" seemed particularly likely to feel lost upon their return to the United States. Other empirical findings (e.g., Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Sewell & Davidsen, 1956) supported the importance of accurate prior cultural experience or prior exposure to the United States for sojourner adjustment with the relationship more consistent for increased social interaction and more general adjustment (Church, 1982). There might be differences in the readjustment level between those who have lived in several overseas locales and those who are 'first

timers'. It is naturally expected that previous experiences in moving between cultures or prior exposure to different cultures would lead to an ease in adjustment to a different environment, whether host or home culture. However, in their investigation of Japanese returnee children, Tamura and Furnham (1993) found that the children who had multiple overseas experiences had more problems such as anxiety, depression and mental complaints, than those who only had a single experience.

2.5.6 Re-entry environment

Clague and Krupp (1978) and Kendall (1981) argued that most expatriates and their spouses experience severe disruption in their housing and standard of living upon repatriation. This disruption creates significant uncertainty concerning the housing arrangements which will be attained, as well as the area in which individuals and families will live, and whether comparable housing will be available and affordable upon returning to the home country (Black & Gregersen, 1991:678). Clague and Krupp (1978) and Kendall (1981) also argued that most expatriates and their spouses who experienced a downward shift in social status upon their return to the U.S.A. experienced increased anxiety. Several studies have found that a general reduction in life style, i.e., a reduction in financial rewards, a downward shift in social status and poorer housing conditions, is one of the important problems associated with the repatriation of family members.

The sojourners may return to a familiar environment, similar to the one they left, (e.g., return to the same family home, the same group of friends, the same

community) or they may return to a different environment, dissimilar to the one they left. The re-entry environment (physical and social), to which the sojourners return, may influence their re-entry experience. However, Martin (1984) suggested that it is not clear what the nature of the impact will be (p.127-8). According to Martin (1984), if a sojourner returns to a different environment, there may be less difficulty adjusting, as this move may be seen as just another environment to which one must adjust. On the other hand, the re-entry may be more difficult if the environment is dissimilar from what one left, because the individual may not expect or be prepared to cope with the change.

2.5.7 Integration into the host society

International sojourners have experienced greater personal changes in beliefs, values, and behavioural norms through their interaction with host societies and their people. The sojourner who integrated well in the host culture might have been exposed more to new ideas and lifestyles. The adjustments sojourners have made to the host society may have caused them to change their ways of thinking and behaving. If these changes in attitudes and behaviours affect the amount of readjustment difficulty to the home culture, as Bochner (1973) found, a person who is most successful at adjusting to a new culture is often not completely successful at readjusting to the old culture, since the new ideas conflict with tradition. Brislin and Van Buren (1974) state that the degree to which a person absorbs the foreign culture affects the degree of difficulty in readjusting to his/her old culture. Tamura and Furnham (1993) also agree that the amount of exposure to different cultures should be considered as a relevant factor for Japanese

returnee children. Thus, it is likely that those who have absorbed the host culture's ways of thinking and behaving may have more difficulty returning home than those who were less integrated into the host culture.

2.5.8 Value change

Gama and Pedersen (1977) suggested that value conflicts existed between the returned Brazilian scholars and their families. Other researchers (e.g., Adler, 1976, Gullahorn & Gullhorn, 1963) also found that readjustment difficulties were experienced by the returnees because they had changed their value orientations. Uehara (1986) examined the re-entry adjustment experiences of American students after an extended sojourn abroad and found that a change in the returned students' values was one of the major factors that influenced their re-entry adjustments. Some of their value changes in daily life included changed relationships with old friends, changed views about male and female relationships, individualism and clothing, and changed achievement-oriented behaviour (p.433). Isa's study (1996), one of the few studies attempted to investigate the re-entry shock of Japanese women, reports that the value changes of Japanese returnee mothers, resulting from living in the U.S.A., were the strongest predictors of both re-entry shock and re-entry problems. Adler (1981) also points out that it is not just the amount of change that a sojourner experiences that is important in the re-entry process, but the awareness of the changes that have occurred.

2.5.9 Variables affecting re-entry and readjustment of the Japanese returnee wives

In the preceding sections, possible factors that seem to influence the returnees' readjustment were described based on the previous re-entry researches. However, the situational and psychological factors encountered by female returnees upon re-entry to their home country have yet to be fully examined. As stated in Chapter 1, the intention of this study was to document the severity of problems associated with reverse culture shock for overseas-experienced wives. But at this stage there was not enough understanding of the roles played by various situational and psychological factors in the returnee wives' readjustment.

Since the aim of this study is to describe and understand the Japanese returnee wives' transitional experiences and their own readjustment problems, specific variables for the Japanese returnee wives' re-entry experiences, which are different from those of returnee corporate personnel, students and children, will be examined. The potential variables may include, for example, the wives' current employment status and aspirations for a professional career, their thoughts about being a company-wife, feelings of embeddedness in a community of friends and relatives, and the availability to them of social support during the transitional period. The preceding variables however, are tentative factors of this study, which are likely to be revised and modified with the emergence of relevant data during the pre-pilot and pilot interviews phases.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The first part of the Chapter 2 provides general definitions of reacculturation and readjustment by drawing on the previous literature. The chapter also looks at the specific nature of Japanese society which may affect the re-entry experience for Japanese nationals. A point to be made here is that this is a study which is specifically concerned with Japanese wives returning to the Japanese society. For this reason some specific consideration of the nature and background of Japanese society has been included, which is intended to provide a frame of reference for this study. This chapter also provides a general introduction to the Japanese company-wives and their specific roles as company-wives. The remaining part of this chapter presents a literature review comparing previous studies and presents the theoretical framework of the thesis where various cross-cultural adjustment theories are examined in order to make comparisons with the readjustment process experienced by the Japanese returnee wives. Also it shows that there are several important differences between adjustment to a foreign culture and readjustment to a home culture. In the last section, based on the review of the previous re-entry researches, several possible variables that may affect the re-entry shock and the readjustment difficulties of the returnees were described.

Chapter 3 Research Design and Data Gathering

The first part of Chapter 3 details the rationale for choosing the method, and the underlying methodological orientation adopted in the study. The background to the method, as well as the outcome and relevance of this type of method are explained. Thus, a major part of this section will be devoted to a description of the research methods employed, fundamental to the foundations for this study.

The second section of this chapter provides a description of the five pre-pilot interviews and twelve pilot interviews, which were conducted for the purpose of formulating a more workable research methodology. The appropriateness and practicality of the method could then be tested and interest in the research was confirmed. Tentative hypotheses for this study which emerged from the pilot interviews are also introduced in this section.

In the next section, the main research questions and subcategories of the questions are provided. The main instruments employed for this study, which were developed in a semi-structured interview format based on key topics and questions examining the informants' readjustment experiences, are presented. In the next section, the in-depth interviews undertaken with three of the returnee wives are described. These were carried out as an additional research instrument to further explore the differences and similarities in coping strategies in the transitional period.

The following sections focus on the application of the method to this study. First, the sampling criteria for the informants and the potential sampling frames for this research are described. Then in the next section, the selection process for the informants for this study (the process of choosing the participants) is stated. Some basic information about the backgrounds of sampling frames and the informants in this study is also provided. The next section shows how the methods were used in accomplishing the aims of the study. It describes the design of the study, and the administration procedures used. The ethical issues arising during the data gathering phases are discussed and finally, the reliability and validity in the methodology for this study is discussed in the last section.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Refining and refocusing the research design

Choosing the method for collecting data for this study involved a complex decision, including considerations of response rates, the types of questions to be asked, the amount of information needed, expense, and so on. In the early phases of this study, the researcher planned a questionnaire research design which would sample a group of individuals drawn from available lists of organisations, schools and supporting networks.

There have been several attempts to define the relevant issues associated with the repatriation of Peace Corps (Adler, 1975), corporate personnel returning from working abroad (Adler, 1981), students and scholars (Gama & Pedersen, 1977;

Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). These studies have identified several common themes which are consistently mentioned by most returnees. They also proposed the interrelationships of background variables and readjustment processes (e.g., Black & Gregersen, 1991; Clague & Krupp, 1978; Enloe & Lewin, 1987; Harvey, 1989, 1982; Seidenberg, 1973). Why do some people find their repatriation experience a more difficult matter than anything encountered in the foreign environment? Readjustment patterns may vary from those personality types who readjust relatively easily to those who readjust with difficulty. The extent to which an individual exhibits disorientation seems to be mediated by socio-psychological factors, as Meintel (1973) suggests, "revelations about oneself" (self-discovery) and the new perspective of one's own society.

Having reviewed the previous literature and conducted preliminary interviews, the researcher felt it was necessary to understand the specific nature of the company-wives' roles and status which differentiated their re-entry experience from those of returnee corporate personnel and students. The researcher began to realise that the understanding of the roles played by social and psychological factors in the returnee wives' readjustment was insufficient for setting hypotheses to test on a systematic basis in a survey questionnaire design. It became apparent that a standardised questionnaire design would run the risk of missing interesting data describing the returnee wives' coping processes and various other intervening social and psychological variables and factors affecting their readjustment and coping experiences. The researcher also considered that a research design limited to a questionnaire survey at one particular point in time would not provide enough information about the readjustment problems and

reacculturation experienced over time. As Koehler (1986) indicates, recovering from re-entry shock is a gradual process—some take six months to a year and others take two years or longer to overcome it.

Ultimately, the researcher decided that an interview methodology would be more appropriate, as this would provide the rich detail and depth of information she needed to fully examine the research questions in this study and to evaluate the preliminary hypotheses regarding the relationship between social and psychological factors and readjustment experiences. Instead of establishing causality, for example, on the basis of connections and relationships between variables, an attempt would be made to develop explanations (whether or not these are causal) through a detailed examination of how the processes work in particular contexts.

There were no established hypotheses available to be tested concerning returnees' psychological and socio-cultural predictors of readjustment. Thus, hypothesis testing of the kind generally envisaged in questionnaire survey research seemed to be inappropriate, and this part of the goal of this study would be consequently redefined towards a preliminary investigation aimed at defining the most influential psychological and socio-cultural parameters. In this sense, this research was partly conceived as exploratory rather than to validate established hypotheses. As Stacy (1969) indicates,

> Hypotheses which are worth testing can only be developed in areas about which a good deal is known, i.e. where a great deal of empirical field data has

already been collected. Before this stage most research is of an exploratory nature...(1969:6).

By shifting to an interview approach, the focus of the study then changed from determining whether there was a statistically significant relationship between readjustment and various factors, to illuminating how the readjustment process was experienced by the returnee wives. Therefore, the first aim of this study is to describe returnee wives' readjustment and coping processes. The second is to examine the patterns of readjustment in different re-entry situations in relation to the range of background variables of the respondents and their personal circumstances (i.e., overseas locations, locations within the host societies, time elements including how long the respondents had lived in the host countries and how long it was since they had returned to Japan, previous re-entry experiences and their re-entry environments). The third aim is to expand our understanding of repatriation and reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the phenomenon by focusing on the psychological and socio-cultural variables which emerged from the pre-pilot and pilot interviews (see section 3.2 Pre-pilot Interviews and Pilot Interviews in this chapter). This goal would be directed towards explaining differences between returnee wives in their degrees of coping and readjustment.

3.1.2 Rationale for using the interview method

In order to accomplish the above stated aims, semi-structured interviews were conducted as a fundamental part of the investigation. The interview method employed in this study was of value for the following reasons:

1. Whilst the questionnaires could provide information about the returning wives at one particular moment in time, and the results obtained helped to define the point reached in the readjustment process at that moment, they contained little information about how that point was arrived at. Since this study intended to explain something about the readjustment processes, which required an understanding of the depth and complexity in the respondents' accounts and experiences, the interview method could increase our knowledge of the process as a whole. For certain issues, the breadth of attention paid to the whole process was important—For example, in considering the "W-curve hypothesis", which is an extension of the single U-curve experienced in adjustment to the double U-curve incorporating the experiences of re-adjustment (Brein & David, 1971:216), taking into account the effects of returning to the home culture.

2. A deeper understanding of the process of readjustment was expected to be facilitated by the personal contact with the respondent gained from the use of the interview method. Those situations would encourage freer expression of emotional reactions with regard to both the negative and the positive aspects of their readjustment experiences.

3.1.3 Which interview method?

The choice of which alternative technique of interviewing to use always involves important considerations of methodology. It requires researchers to make decisions about the type of information needed, and what kind of analysis of that

information will be carried out. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982) noted, in-depth interviewing may best be considered along a continuum from structured to unstructured. The more standardised the interview, the more easily the data can be coded and analysed. However, whilst a structured interview will provide precise quantitative data, an unstructured interview will often provide richer insights of the problems and the phenomena.

The approach of this study to interviewing fell somewhere in the middle of Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) continuum and might have been thought of as a combination of what Patton (1990) terms *the interview guide approach* and *the standardised open-ended approach* (Patton, 1990:284). According to Patton (1990:280), *the interview guide approach* involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins and presumes that there is common information that should be obtained from each person interviewed. Thus, the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously. *The standardised open-ended interview* consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words. This approach may be particularly appropriate to minimise the effects of interviewer judgements, influence or bias by asking the same questions of each respondent (p.285). The standardised open-ended approach also makes data analysis easier because it is possible to locate each respondent's answers in a standardised, uniform matrix.

This study combined an interview guide approach with a standardised open-ended approach. An interview format was developed, based on key topics and types of questions which the researcher would be likely to want to ask. Overall, the interviewing style was to pose as broad a question as possible within a given area of inquiry. However, a number of basic questions were worded precisely in a predetermined fashion, while permitting the interviewer more flexibility in probing and determining when it was appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth, or even to undertake whole new areas of inquiry that were not originally included in the interview questions. In this way, the format allowed the interviewer to discover the respondents' own perceptions of their situations and gave them the opportunity to express themselves on matters of significance to them rather than those which had been presumed important by the interviewer.

3.1.4 Rationale for in-depth interviewing: a "topical, short life history"

Maycut and Morehouse (1994) suggested that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to provide readers with a rich description of the phenomenon under study through the language used by the participants. In clarifying the term phenomenon, which is often associated with qualitative inquiry, Patton (1990) defined phenomenology as the study of how individuals describe things through their senses. A philosophical movement in phenomenology began in the year 1905 with the work of Edmund Husserl, and had been developed by Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Buber, and Heidegger. Husserl understood phenomenology as a

discipline that attempted to describe what was given to us in experience, without any obscuring preconceptions or hypothetical speculations (Husserl, 1970, 1931).

The goal of phenomenology was the intuitive foundation and clarification of the essential structures which underline knowledge and (known or experienced) reality (Casmir, 1993). Patton (1990) further described that initially all understanding would come from sensory experience of phenomena but that experience must have been explicated, described, and interpreted. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that qualitative data places an emphasis on people's experiences and is fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the processes, events, and structures of their lives. Phenomenology is a philosophical perspective as well as an approach to qualitative research, that seeks to investigate and describe the subjective experiences without hypothesising or imposing itself onto others' interpretations.

The primary data collection technique in this study was through semi-structured interviews. However, the research design in this study also used a qualitative in-depth interviewing technique which has been referred to as "non-directive, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended" interviewing (Taylor & Bogdon, 1998:88), in the collection and analysis of data. According to Taylor and Bogdon (1998), informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations, expressed in their own words, can be captured through repeated face-to-face in-depth interviews (1998:88). The phenomenological perspective was considered to provide the required in-depth explanation and understanding of the returnee wives' readjustment experiences in their home country.

Taylor and Bogdon (1998) suggested that life history could be considered as one type of qualitative interview study. Plummer (2001) specified documentary sources such as diaries, films, letters and oral history recordings, and argued for their use in achieving a "critical humanism". He drew deeply upon contemporary understanding of narrative in developing approaches to the use of life documents within social science. According to Eyles and Perri (1993:107), "Life history is the account of [an individual's] life, completed or ongoing." In the life history approach, the researcher attempts to capture the salient experiences in an individual's life and his or her definitions of those experiences.

The life history presents individuals' perceptions of their lives in their own words. In this study, the researcher sought to understand the thoughts, feelings and attitudes of returnee wives during the transitional period. The returnee wives' readjustment strategies in their home country appeared to be complex and were also influenced by their personalities. To explore the research questions, especially regarding the returnee wives' strategies to deal with their readjustment difficulties, the researcher conducted intensive face-to-face interviews with three exemplars by looking in detail at their re-entry experiences and coping strategies. What Plummer (2001) called "a topical, short life history approach" was used because it seemed to be fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings the returnee wives placed on their re-entry and coping processes during the transition.

3.2 Pre-pilot Interviews and Pilot Interviews

3.2.1 Pre-pilot interviews

As described in the above sections, this study originally intended to use a questionnaire survey. Before an extensive survey questionnaire was developed however, a descriptive study was attempted to confirm the feasibility of the research plan and to identify possible modifications. This attempt was made by using the potential respondents, i.e., company-wives residing in the U.K., to identify the major problems and difficulties faced by returnee company-wives. In addition it was intended to elicit some of the effects of their overseas sojourns on their readjustment to the home society and their subsequent participation in groups or friendship circles at home. As a preliminary step, in the summer of 1999, the interviews (in Japanese) were conducted with five Japanese company-wives living in the greater London area and surrounding counties. One of the company-wives interviewed had previously been on a sojourn in Holland and returned to Japan. The other four wives had no experience of re-entry so the focus of the interviews with them was on how they anticipated readjustment.

The intention was to allow each interview to develop naturally, enabling the respondent to direct the conversation along her own lines and filling in the schedule to suit her own order. Any question from the respondent was converted into a cue for further development for the pilot and main interviews. Thus, the aims of the pre-pilot interviews were: (1) to re-establish the focus of interest of the study; (2) to discover if there would be any significant topics that had not been included or if the respondent had further thoughts about the topics that had been discussed; (3) to identify any criticism of the interview technique, and (4) to

provide a general and open-ended framework for more specific structured questions in later sections of the interview schedule.

The results of these preliminary interviews allowed the researcher to discover which of the re-entry problems would be likely to cause concern among the returnee wives. They also indicated several interesting insights regarding overall satisfaction with their lives in the U.K., perceived changes as a consequence of living abroad and thoughts about being a company-wife. The summary of the pre-pilot interviews will be found in APPENDIX A1.

When the researcher started planning this study, there were many ideas which seemed to be worth testing. Some topics and questions for the interviews were based on the researcher's experience of the Japanese company-wives residing in the U.K. Some arose from the researcher's first-hand experiences as a Japanese company-wife. Others were drawn in part from the existing literature and studies of the main areas of the problems of reverse cultural shock as discussed in Chapter 2. The preliminary informal interviews with five Japanese company-wives allowed the researcher to identify the major concerns and difficulties they might face upon re-entry and to elicit the likely effects of their overseas sojourn on their readjustment to the home society (APPENDIX A1). The researcher felt that the pre-pilot interviews with the sample of company-wives residing in the U.K. had confirmed the interest in the research and that they had covered a reasonable range of re-entry environments and reactions.

3.2.2 Pilot interviews

In the next step, pilot interviews were conducted after examining the results from the pre-pilot interviews. The pilot interviews were conducted from June 2000 to November 2000. The aim of the main interviews in this study would be to investigate the respondents' own perceptions of their situations which might be placed in context by their own recollections of their past. In order to translate this aim into a series of questions, the pilot study was undertaken prior to the main interviews. Since there was not enough information about the subject matter (specifically, attitudinal variables), unstructured interviews with well-placed and informative respondents were considered to be the best way of acquiring enough knowledge to be able to devise a specific set of questions to ask.

Recruiting respondents for the pilot-interviews

Attempts to find potential informants were begun in Tokyo in March 2000, but obtaining the required population of Japanese returnee wives proved to be a difficult task. The researcher contacted a women's organisation ("Network A") consisting of mothers of returnee children, and asked for their co-operation in the research. Returnee Network A is a voluntary network supporting returnee children and families and it was set up in 1983 by a group of returnee mothers. Network A was chosen because the researcher had close relationships with the network. The network was well-known to returnee mothers in the Tokyo area with its active involvement in supporting returnee families during their transitional period. The network provided a physically accessible research site, as well as a number of potential respondents.

The researcher made her first contact with Mrs. A, one of the volunteer staffs of the organisation, in April 2000. Mrs A suggested that the researcher should ring Mrs. W, the chairperson, to discuss the matter and explain the outline of the project. The chairperson responded positively to the initial suggestion of research, and subsequently asked the staff members if the researcher could conduct interviews with them. The chairperson made the point that the mothers actually sought help from them and may have resented being interviewed about this sensitive area. She suggested that the researcher should interview the staff members who work for the organisation as counsellors, who themselves were returnee mothers. She said she would ask for cooperation from some of the volunteer members. Since different people worked on different days of the week, she agreed to put a note, which briefly explained the research topic, on the board to see if there would be someone who would agree to participate in the interviews. Mrs. W then kindly provided referrals and contact numbers of volunteer members in the network who themselves were returnee wives living in Tokyo. It was May 2000 before permission was given to interview six members from the organisation, and the interviews were set up and carried out from June 2000.

The potential sample pool comprised twelve returnee mothers. The initial contact with the six members of Network A was made via telephone, and the researcher explained the purposes and procedures of the pilot study. The six returnee mothers agreed to be informants primarily because they were interested in the research topic, and some mentioned that they wanted to reveal some of the difficulties they had encountered in their re-entry experiences. Amongst the

remaining mothers, there were two refusals to cooperate, and in one case the appointment could not be made within a reasonable time due to sickness. Mutually convenient appointment times were made for those who had agreed to be informants. All the six pilot interviews were held at their network office in Tokyo.

The researcher was able to ask some of these six informants to direct her to other returnee mothers whom they knew. The use of reputational sampling (snowball technique) was effective in recruiting participants in the pilot study. Another seven potential informants were contacted with the help of the initial six informants from the network. Of the seven referrals, six wives were willing to be interviewed. The place used for the interviews varied from informant to informant, such as coffee shops near their closest train stations and a community centre. Other interviews took place at the informants' houses. Table 3.4.1 in section 3.4 "Sampling" in this chapter gives a summary of data relating to sample size and reasons for failure to interview (both for the pilot interviews and main interviews).

Each of the twelve unstructured interviews lasted one and a half to two hours. The conversations were conducted in Japanese and recorded on an audio recorder. The informants were asked to attempt to answer all questions as fully as they possibly could. The participants had all expressed a wish to help in this study, and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The purpose of the pilot studies was to find out whether the method of data collection would be

suitable and also to better define the nature and format of interviews to be used. Many of the responses and suggestions prompted the researcher to change the length of questions and the order in which they were asked, and to develop and practice follow-up questions. The pilot study assured the researcher that the questions were clear, easy to understand and relevant in addressing the core research questions. The pilot interview schedule is found in APPENDIX A2. The researcher felt that personal qualitative interviews were the most appropriate method for advancing the research but also accepted that this would involve extensive time and travel.

After finishing the pilot interviews and examining the results (to be analysed together with the main interviews in Chapter 4), the researcher felt that most of the questions in the interviews seemed to work well and provided results that would help address the original research questions. It was decided that the main interviews would be able to proceed without many changes by finalising the interview schedule. The methodology and the instruments were put into final form in the winter of 2001.

3.2.3 Tentative hypothesis emerging from the pilot interviews

Once the pilot interviews were completed, the interview transcripts and field notes were examined for common themes and patterns across cases and the following findings were reported as tentative hypotheses:

1) The longer the wives stayed abroad, the more difficult it will be for them to reintegrate into the social circles in Japan.

2) The length of time since returning to Japan is positively related to the readjustment level of the returnee wives.

3) Previous overseas and re-entry experiences may influence returnee wives' readjustment processes.

4) The greater the degree of involvement in the foreign culture, the more difficulties the returnee wives will experience in their re-entry adjustment.

5) The greater the degree of involvement in the expatriate Japanese community, the less difficulties the returnee wives will experience in their re-entry adjustment.

6) The more the wives were willing to move abroad, the more they will experience re-entry shock.

7) The more the wives were keen to stay abroad, the more they will experience re-entry shock.

8) Those returnee wives who identify positively with their overseas experiences will be less likely to adjust easily to life back in Japan.

9) The greater the cognitive and attitudinal changes in wives through their overseas experiences, the more difficulties they will experience in their re-entry adjustment.

10) The more positively they identified with their company-wives' roles while they were abroad, the harder the readjustment.

11) Those returnee wives who are more sensitive to Japanese social norms would experience more difficulties when they reintegrate into the social circles in Japan.

3.3 Research Instruments

3.3.1 The main research questions and subcategories of the questions

Whilst in the preliminary study, the interviews were as unstructured as possible, this was not the case for the main interviews. The schedule contained a series of questions for which answers had to be obtained. A number of these included simple factual questions, such as the demographics of the respondent (age, family composition, husband's occupation, etc.) and the personal circumstances (e.g., overseas location, location within the host society, time elements such as how long the respondent had lived in the host country and how long it had been since she returned to Japan, previous re-entry experiences and questions relating to the re-entry environment). These questions were used to determine if there was any pattern to the various subgroups and their responses.

As Furnham and Bochner (1986) indicated, most of the previous researches examining the relationships between geographic movement and adaptation have shown that demographic variables by themselves lead to only modest levels of statistical prediction and explanation. They suggested the necessity of adding psychological and attitudinal variables to account for the effects of geographic movements. In part, the readjustment process depended on the returnee wife herself. The personality of the wife was considered to be an important factor affecting her readjustment coping style, but her coping style was also limited and shaped by a number of forces over which the wife did not have direct control. Each of the factors did not operate in isolation, but rather in a complex

combination. The variability in the readjustment processes was affected both by situational factors and by the attitudinal variables (including social skills required for adaptation to a new environment).

The interview guide was developed to standardise the interview for collecting data but the design accommodated following up lines of inquiry specific to the wives' circumstances, which the interviewer would not be able to anticipate in advance. In this way therefore, it was possible to maximise flexibility, but also provide a guide or prompt relating to the key issues and questions with which the study was concerned. The main research questions and its subcategories were set out as follows:

<u>The main research questions</u>

1. What are the specific problems of reverse culture shock experienced by returnee wives?
2. The intensity of readjustment problems may vary between the individuals. How do the various situational and/or attitudinal factors affect the extent to which an individual exhibits these difficulties?
3. How did they cope with the readjustment difficulties? What sort of strategies did they use to deal with the problems?

<u>Subcategories of the main research questions</u>

1. Are there any differences in their readjustment difficulties relating to their background and situational variables?
2. How do their attitudes towards international moves affect their re-entry transitions?
3. Is there a relationship between the degree of adjustment to the host culture and the degree of readjustment to their home culture?
4. How do the changes as a consequence of their experiences abroad (e.g., new attitudes and behaviours) influence their re-entry adjustment?
5. What were their main areas of difficulty after returning home? How did they cope with the problems? How did the specific nature of Japanese society influence their readjustment in the home environment?
6. How does the degree of involvement in a company-wife's role affect her readjustment problems and difficulties? What are their ideas about the significance of their own work and careers?

3.3.2 Interview schedule: Questions that probe the theoretical constructions

Sample questions for the main interviews are included in Table 3.3.1 in the next page. The whole interview schedule is found in APPENDIX B.

After the pilot interviews, it was decided to use vignettes to gain deeper responses, to let the respondents talk more at ease, to "loosen up" and to obtain more private thoughts. Vignettes may be used to clarify people's judgements, to provide a less personal and therefore less threatening ways of exploring sensitive topics, and to unable participants to define the situation in their own terms

Table 3.3.1 Sample Questions that Probe Theoretical Constructs

Theoretical Constructs	Questions that Probe Constructs
Integration into the host culture	
- Social circles and interpersonal relationships in the host society	Where you lived, what opportunities were available for spouses who wish to get involved in voluntary work or other kinds of community activities?
	Which, if any, have you had time to get involved with?
	Were you involved in children's school activities?
	How did you see yourself fitting into the local community?
	During your stay in ___, have you made any good friends?
	How would you describe your "best friend"? (e.g., other mother, non-mother, or family, etc.; local individual, fellow Japanese company-wife, or another foreigner)
	How did you spend your time with your friends?
	How would you describe your relationship with local families? For example, have you ever invited them to your house or have you ever been invited to visit them?
- Overall attitudes toward sojourn experience	What were your main areas of difficulties during your sojourn?
	What were your initial feelings about moving to a foreign country from the place where you lived?
	What have you found to be the chief advantages and disadvantages for you of recent international moves?
	In general, how do you feel about your overall experience in ___?
	As a result of your experience in that country (and if you had the choice), would you prefer to stay in that country, return to Japan, or go to another country?
Awareness of change	
-View of Japan	After some time abroad, did you miss Japan? If yes, in what ways?
	What difference do you find between the lifestyle, ways of thought, attitude, behaviour and habits, etc. of Japanese people and people in ___?
	In what ways has your stay affected your view of Japan? Do you feel you are more positive/negative now about Japan or no effect?
-Awareness of changes in self as a result of foreign experience	What changes in yourself do you see or feel as a result of your foreign experience?
	How much do you think you have changed in regard to personal development, feelings of self-confidence, feelings of independence?
	What would you say you got out of the overseas experience?
-Attitudes to paid work ad paid work roles	Did you work before foreign assignment?
	Are you working since you returned?
	In what ways, did your foreign experience change your view of women working outside the home?
	How would you describe situations for working mothers in _____?
	What do you feel in general about mother working?
	Does your husband have the same views as you?

(Table 3.3.1 Continued)

Theoretical Constructs	Questions that Probe Constructs
Readjustment difficulties	
- Feelings about returning (anticipated difficulties)	How did you feel about going home? For example, were you eager to go home? Not sure about going home? What things talked about when a returning move was planned? During your overseas stay, did you find yourself worrying about what would happen to you and your family upon returning home? What were your positive expectations (if any) about going home?
- Problems and difficulties experienced after returning to Japan	What were your main areas of difficulties after returning home? How do you get along with your friends and relatives (especially your mother-in-law) now? How did you feel your absence have affected your relationships with your relatives, friends, or neighbours (or colleagues if applicable)? Was the readaptation process stressful? How did you cope with your difficulties (if any)? Does your husband's firm have any repatriation support programs?
- General psychological well being	What would you say are the best things about being back in Japan? How happy were you when you returned back in your home environment? Have you experienced any emotional responses/reactions (e.g. feeling of confusion, isolation, disappointment, frustration, loneliness, insecurity, uselessness, etc.) since you returned? How happy are you just now? If you compare your life now with what it was like before (during your foreign assignment), would you say you are happier now, less happy or about the same? Please explain why you feel happier/less happy. Have you ever felt there is anything else you would rather be doing now?

(Barter & Renold, 1999:1). Employing vignettes as an ice breaker at the beginning of an interview can facilitate a discussion around participants' opinions and the terms they use (Hazel, 1995:2), it can also be a good way of developing rapport by making them feel at ease (Barter & Renold, 1999:3-4). This vignette strategy was tried for the first few respondents in the main interviews, especially for those who were rather quiet, and it seemed to work well. Also a question asking if they had known other returnees who had had difficulties in reintegrating was added. This also seemed to work well to elicit views from wives who were rather shy or passive, less willing to voice their own experiences and

opinions. The two vignettes used in the main interviews were formulated in part from the existing literature (e.g., Isa, 1996; Muto, 1994) and the results of pilot interviews. They are:

Vignette 1:

Mrs. Sato who returned to Japan after a five year stay in the U.S.A. describes her difficulty in making friends:

> *I returned to the country side of Kanagawa. People here are not open-minded to newcomers. When I first attended the PTA meeting at my son's school, I was treated as a stranger. I could not make friends with other mothers because they had already formed a group. No one talked to me. I felt that I was an outsider. I was left sitting alone...*

Vignette 2:

Mrs. Tanaka, who lived in the U.K. for seven years reported her difficulty in associating with her old friends:

> *After I returned to Japan, they had a welcome party for me. I talked about our lives in the U.K. and they said they were envious of me. They also interpreted my behaviour as bragging. I seemed to stand out. They secretly spoke maliciously about me. When I heard about it from my friends, I was really shocked.*

The researcher read the vignettes to the respondents and asked them to describe how they felt Mrs. Sato and Mrs. Tanaka in the stories would act and why, and then how they would respond in those situations and why.

3.4 Sampling

3.4.1 Sampling Criteria

A qualitative inquiry usually focuses in depth on a relatively small sample of people selected purposefully. The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases from which one can learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 1990:169). The principle of understanding the process rather than representing a population must be kept clearly in view when deciding how many units of a particular type will be selected in order to constitute a relevant range for purposes of comparison and explanation (Mason, 1996).

No single sampling frame adequately represented all returnee wives in Japan, however, further examination of the government statistics and previous studies suggested that, numerically, certain kinds of returnee wives were far more typical than other kinds. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in Japan) statistics define Japanese nationals residing overseas either as permanent resident aliens or as nonpermanent long-term residents (those residing abroad for at least three months). Of these long-term or prolonged residents, 56.7 percent were employed by private companies, such industries as trading, banking, and manufacturing,

and 24.8 percent was engaged in educational or cultural occupations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999). Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture and Technology statistics (2002) showed that 7,248 elementary school age children returned in the year 1999 and the returnee families were concentrated mainly around the Tokyo area, where most major government, business, and academic institutions are based. The head offices of companies with a large number of workers overseas are also concentrated in Tokyo, and they have their own small office concerned with the welfare of these employees and their families.

Kato (1986:62) suggested that about 50 per cent of returnee children in the mid-1980s attended schools which were part of the special education system for returnee school children. These schools are known by a variety of names, but one generic term is *ukeireko*, which literally means 'reception school' or 'readjustment school'.

In a survey of around 1,000 parents with children in overseas Japanese schools, Kawabata and Suzuki (1981:31) found that over 80 per cent of the fathers were in the age-band 36-45, and very nearly 80 per cent of the mothers were in the age-band 31-40. The same survey also showed the high level of education of these expatriates, which is not surprising when one considers that most of them had held managerial positions. Very nearly 90 per cent of the men had received a university education, whilst 35 per cent of the women had received a university education and 25 percent had a two-year junior college degree (1981:31). The vast majority of families assigned overseas took their children with them. According to

White (1988) nearly 80 percent of these families took their children, and about 70 per cent of those children were elementary school age.

In this present study, the respondents were selected as examples of returnee wives, not as a random or representative sample. However, an attempt was made to develop hypotheses that could be generally relevant for the transitional experiences of returnee women. A comparative study of the relationships between several factors applying to the sampled wives was intended to some degree. This was done in order to limit certain characteristics of the sample that have to be taken into account in making comparisons.

Firstly, the respondents in this study were restricted to company-wives whose husbands were sent abroad to carry out overseas assignments (and those wives whose husbands are public servants for government agencies), whose experiences covered a reasonable range of returnee environments and reactions. The selection incorporated returnee wives with different combinations of situational variables, e.g., overseas location, location within the host society, time elements such as how long the respondents have lived in the host country and how long is it since they returned to Japan, and previous re-entry experiences.

Secondly, the researcher tried to select a sample population that would offer insight into the overseas experience and readjustment process. This study intended to look at returnee wives who had a certain degree of involvement in the foreign culture. Having stayed for only a year or so without strong commitments to their overseas lives allowed them to have some influence over their attitudinal

changes, since their involvement in the foreign life and their acceptance by the host people were not often among the most important of their goals. Consequently, all cases having less than one year in the sojourn country would be excluded from the sample in this study.

Thirdly, all persons who indicated their length of time back in Japan as less than six months were excluded in the analysis in order to avoid fluctuations in responses that might have been due to an immediate reverse culture shock upon returning to Japan. The first few months of returning to Japan would be marked by a psychological reorientation, generally in favour of Japan in terms of social customs, foods, and the familiarity of everyday home life. The newly returned wives often could not assess accurately the value of their overseas experiences and changes in their attitudes and behaviour, until they had spent a reasonable period of time back in Japan.

In summary, the respondents in this study were restricted to returnee wives whose experiences covered a reasonable range of returnee environments and reactions. Returnee wives were eligible to participate in this study if they conformed to the following criteria: had stayed abroad for more than one year to accompany their husbands' overseas assignment from Japanese companies/organisations, had been back in Japan for at least six months.

3.4.2 Sampling frames and sampling selection procedure

The selection of a sample for study is an important aspect of research design. The selection of participants may occur on the basis of the initial definition of the group, theoretical direction or other factors, such as convenience. This section describes how the researcher chose a particular setting, why it was chosen, and the specific aspects listed.

Qualitative researchers can elect to base the selection of participants on similarities to study specific aspects of phenomena, or selection can attempt to reflect a "real-world" situation through the choice of participants on the basis of differences (Bromley, 1986). For this present study, multiple sampling frames were employed rather than only one as the researcher could not locate enough participants fitting the research criteria. Multiple sampling adds confidence to findings and strengthens the precision, the validity, and the stability of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994:29).

There were several stages involved in the selection process with selection based on purposeful sampling. The sampling method which was used for this study was considered to be purposeful because the researcher selected informants based on the aims of her research. The size of the sample was shaped by practical considerations such as the amount of time available, the geographical accessibility, and other restrictions placed upon the researcher. The sample was also shaped by the focus of the research problems and questions, and the above mentioned criteria. To promote intensive analysis and the corresponding development of a conceptual framework, a relatively small sample size was selected. To carry out this study, a total of twenty-three returnee wives were

recruited for the main interviews with several stages involved in the sampling process.

In a situation, where no single sampling frame adequately represented all returnee wives, organisations/networks which represent typical returnee wives consequently seemed the best place to begin the selection. To this end, access was sought and obtained to readjustment schools and several networks for returnee children in the metropolitan Tokyo area. For practical reasons it was necessary to select a school or network in an accessible location and, as the researcher lived and worked in Tokyo and the vast majority of sojourners returned there, the research was undertaken in Tokyo and its surrounding area. It should be noted that there was no obvious bias in choosing the areas in the sampling selection procedure.

Some of the original criteria shown above were established for the purpose of limiting the scope of the research but other criteria would be introduced in the later sampling stages to address the researcher's specific interest. For example, the interest in studying childless returnee wives to see if there was a difference in their readjustment difficulties due to the presence of children. The objective was to select a relatively small sample of some diversity to produce detailed, information rich descriptions of each case. Any common themes which emerged were all the more important for having come from a small, heterogeneous sample. This sample was not chosen on the basis of some pre-determined criteria but inductively in line with the developing conceptual requirements of the study (Ellis, 1993:473). In order to build this type of sample, Maykut and Morehouse

(1994:57) recommended the technique of "snowball sampling" whereby the researcher begins with one sampling unit and asks them to put her in touch with others of a known type. In this way, the researcher is able to include additional respondents with different characteristics. For example, both returnee wives with children and without children, or both wives who had a paid job and those who did not work outside home. This procedure was tried in the later sampling strategy.

The potential sampling frames used were as follows:

Sampling Frame 1: State readjustment schools: School A and School B

All readjustment schools, whether private or state, provide remedial Japanese language work and intensive academic counselling towards appropriate educational and occupational goals. In 1999, the Japanese Ministry of Education designated three elementary schools (two state schools and one private school) in Tokyo as schools which promote education and research for returnee children. There were also two elementary schools attached to national universities which serve as laboratories for educational research. Besides the private and specially subsidised "receiving schools", the Ministry appointed five wards to receive relatively large numbers of returnee children in the Tokyo area. These provide additional support for students in the ward and for city schools through specialised classes and programmes. Initially it was intended that the research would be conducted for the five wards but, for several reasons, this had to be reduced to just two areas, Ward A and City B.

These two areas were chosen, partly because they had a relatively large number of returnee children and partly because both were known to be active local authorities in Tokyo in providing educational assistance for returnee families and foreign residents through their cultural and educational exchange offices. The researcher expected them to provide her with ample potential respondents. In order to support a satisfactory school life, "The International Exchange and Education Office" in Ward A, and "The Multicultural Educational Assistance Office" in City B, offer various kinds of services and programmes, such as counselling sessions, Japanese tutoring, foreign language classes, parents' meetings, school life guidance, translation and interpretation services, and cultural exchange parties. Two elementary schools in the areas (School A in Ward A and School B in City B) were selected on the basis of advice given by school system administrators who suggested the schools they considered likely to participate in the research.

Gaining entry

In September 2000, negotiations began with both of these areas' authorities to be allowed access, initially by sending letters requesting co-operation by key persons (APPENDIX C). Gaining the trust of gatekeepers at both offices, at many hierarchical levels within the schools, was a time consuming and sometimes frustrating process. Although access was established to some degree in each of the settings, the researcher was constantly involved in maintaining the relationships which had been established with the gatekeepers. Reciprocity in the form of reports and presentations to various school committees had to be agreed upon. This had increased the level of co-operation within the schools. As Patton

(1990) suggested, gaining entry not only included the formal aspects of signing off and obtaining permission, but also included establishing trust and building up a rapport with all of the participants, informants and gatekeepers.

Following the advice of the gatekeepers, the researcher approached the school principals with a research plan, which included reasons why the research was needed in the schools, the general research design and the intended focus. During the initial meetings with the principals, reciprocal agreements were made, including promises of confidentiality for the schools and participants. From these two elementary schools, a sample of six returnee mothers in total (three from each school) agreed to be interviewed.

Sampling frame 2: A private readjustment school: School C

Whilst the researcher was able to recruit some respondents from state elementary schools, a further sample was obtained through a private readjustment school that has more intensively organised programmes for returnee children. This setting is referred to as School C, and is well-known for its unique returnee children's readjustment course, called the 'International Class'. Other than the two national elementary schools mentioned in the previous section, there are only two private elementary schools in the Tokyo area that have separate classes for returnee children. School C is one of them, which has provided education for returnee children for more than 30 years. They only receive returnee children in grades 5 and 6 (ages eleven to twelve), and there are thirty-six returnee children in total (about 20 percent of the total number of children in the grades).

This choice was aided by questionnaires (asking the administrators of the returnee courses to describe their programmes) and observations in several private returnees' schools prior to deciding upon the primary research site. The researcher wrote to officials in several schools which received returnee children, introducing the research project, explaining who she was, what she was doing, how the research was to be conducted, and that she sought help in finding returnee mothers. Other than School C, the officials generally advised that they thought the research was interesting but they did not think they could introduce the researcher to mothers in their official capacity.

Gaining entry

An initial contact was made through the co-ordinator of the returnee programme at School C, who actually taught 6th grade returnee children enrolled on the programme. A negotiation began with him for access in November 2000. Contrary to the responses from the state elementary schools, this school was very co-operative, following approaches made to the co-ordinator, together with a research plan in which the general parameters of the research were again explained. It was agreed that the researcher would be given the chance to talk about the research in front of the mothers of the 'International Class' when they came to the school for a monthly meeting with the teachers, although the coordinator said that the researcher would only be allowed to talk to the mothers of their 6th graders. The researcher was invited to the meeting, and afterwards she explained the outline and the procedures of the research and was able to recruit potential participants. All sixteen mothers from the meeting agreed to be interviewed straight away, although in two cases the mothers were unable to

make an appointment within a reasonable time due to other commitments. In addition, there was one returnee wife who did not meet the sampling criteria for this study. Consequently, a total of thirteen returnee wives at School C were interviewed for the main study.

Sampling frame 3: Companies/Corporations

Because the sampling frames described above were relatively homogeneous, all wives having children of elementary school age and all exemplifying a mother whose main concerns were her children's educational readjustment, it was decided to select additional informants with different characteristics in order to broaden the conceptual base of the study.

Corporation A was chosen as a starting point, mainly due to a previously developed personal connection with the company. The researcher had been an employee at the corporation, and thus a rapport was more easily established. Corporation A is one of the leading general trading companies in Japan and shows great diversification as an integrated business enterprise. It not only conducts commodity transactions in all industries utilising worldwide networks, but also provides its customers with various financing packages and serves as an organiser and a coordinator for various projects.

The age and overseas sojourn pattern of the returnee wives in this sampling frame were virtually the same as those of the previous samples, but it was considered that the company would give more variation in terms of the wives' situations and overseas postings because of its global relations and networks, sending a large number of overseas employees to different locations.

Gaining entry

A useful random sample of returnee wives would have been very difficult to obtain from additional corporations as they would not release their employees' name lists to outsiders. However, additional respondents in the third sampling frame were collected through prior connections with persons in Corporation A who had been overseas. Collecting a sample of persons who would cooperate freely with the researcher was greatly facilitated by contacts furnished by friends and associates. It became apparent at this stage that returnee wives tended to associate less on the basis of long-standing personal connections and more as fellow returnee wives or as a result of shared experiences overseas. This produced a wider range of contacts. The sample obtained consisted of four returnee wives whose husbands worked for large multinational trading companies, banks and manufacturers.

Table 3.4.1 below summarises the results of attempts to recruit returnee women for this research.

For the first two sampling sites above, entry was expedited by a written research plan or outline, including reasons for the research, design and focus. In other cases the research plans were given verbally. In all cases, initial contact was made through the gatekeepers or key persons of each organisation. At a preliminary contact, before agreeing to participate, each participant was given an outline of the research and a time scale for each of the interviews involved (APPENDIX D).

Table 3.4.1 Results of Attempts to Recruit Returnee Wives for Research

Agencies Contacted	No. of referrals provided by the agency	No. of women consenting to first interview
Pilot interviews		
・Returnee Network A	12 Failed to contact: 3 Contacted, not interviewed: 3 (refused: 2, offered appointment too far ahead: 1)	6
・Friends and Colleagues of the members of Network A	7 Failed to contact: 1	6
Main interviews		
・International Exchange Office in ward A (School A)	3	3
・Multicultural Education Assistance Office in City B (School B)	3	3
・School C	16 Contacted, not interviewed: 3 (offered appointment too far ahead: 2 did not meet the sampling criteria:1)	13
・Corporation A (the researcher's personal connections)	—	4
total	41	35

3.5 Procedures of Data Gathering

3.5.1 Setting up the interviews

An initial introduction to the potential respondents was made via telephone or personal contact. Then a letter was sent to each of the respondents explaining the

purpose of the research, providing the rationale for the study, giving brief details of what it would involve and inviting their co-operation. Subsequently the researcher telephoned to confirm their assistance and to arrange a meeting. Some respondents questioned the researcher and expressed uneasiness during the calls. Others expressed a wish to help in this study. However, all contacted returnee wives agreed to be interviewed after they were assured that confidentiality was integral to the research.

Mutually convenient appointment times were made for the research interviews to be held. In several cases, interviews were conducted in a quiet, convenient locations, of the respondents' choice, either at their homes or at coffee houses near their closest train stations. Other interviews took place at public places such as, a lounge at the local community centre.

Initially, two interview sessions were planned for each interviewee. The purposes of the second session were to verify with the interviewees the findings found in the first interview so that it could give the interviewees a chance to give additional comments that were missed in the first session and to give the interviewer a chance to explore the issues which had emerged from the first session. However, due to the limitation of time for some of the interviewees, eighteen respondents were only interviewed once.

3.5.2 Conducting the main interviews

Initially, an attempt was made to establish rapport and put the participant at ease. At first, a brief review of the purpose of the study was given, and gratitude was expressed for their willingness to participate. The safeguards to confidentiality were explained as indicated in the consent form (APPENDIX E). Then the researcher explained the format/style of interview she was going to conduct and indicated how long the interview was likely to take. Permission was requested to use a small tape recorder, and once again there was a reminder that it could be switched off and the audio cassette wiped at any time. The tapes were then transcribed for analysis and counterchecked by the researcher (and a peer judge for the first six pilot interviews).

During the pre-pilot and pilot phases, the researcher tried to be flexible when she conducted the interviews, although this was initially quite demanding. Several of the earlier interviews in the pre-pilot studies showed up areas which could be strengthened. The researcher had been overly concentrated on covering the whole schedule and as a result, the overall "feel" of the interviews was rather formal and the responses seemed to lack depth. The questions had been asked rather formally, and were not considered fully enough before moving. Examining the transcribed data, there seemed to be many occasions where probes could have been used which could have provided more chances of eliciting much deeper information or responses.

However, after conducting several pilot interviews, the researcher could feel herself becoming more familiar with the interviewing techniques and her communication seemed to become accordingly more relaxed and to encourage

deeper responses. The researcher tried to concentrate more closely on what the respondent was saying and each interviewee was not asked the questions in exactly the same order. Instead, the questioning went with the flow of the information they offered. It used minimal questions for the pilot interviews in order to elicit material relevant to the research, and to avoid limiting the range of issues which the wives may have wished to explore. Although the researcher was guided by this schedule, she did not ask the questions in a set order or sequence, and flexibility was needed so that areas of interest could be followed up and further explored. The five general topic areas were probed to some degree with all informants, depending on the extent to which the topics seemed meaningful to the individual and relevant to her experience. The general areas of inquiry included: the problems encountered upon re-entry and the considered degree of difficulty in the re-entry process; perception of the overseas experience and degree of integration into the host culture; awareness of change as a result of the overseas sojourn; thoughts about being a company-wife; and perception of Japan. Each informant was also asked the same general background questions so that comparable data would be available across the cases to see if the differences in their readjustment processes could be predicted in terms of their demographic and situational variables.

All the respondents were female and of about the same age as the researcher herself. In addition, the researcher herself is a returnee wife. This seemed to allow interviewees to relate to her easily. This definitely helped to establish a rapport much more than if she had presented herself just as a research student. When the researcher presented herself, the respondents treated her as a fellow

returnee wife and a mother, and she felt quite relaxed with them often laughing together during the interviews. A very positive rapport was noted between the researcher and the respondents.

The twenty-three main interviews were started from January 2001 and completed in March 2002. The semi-structured research interviews took between one and two hours depending on how talkative the interviewees were. The informants were advised to attempt to answer all questions as fully as they possibly could. If at any time during the interview, the informant felt uncomfortable or experienced any stress or anxiety, the interview was discontinued. The researcher had decided not to use a tape recorder when the interviews touched on some fairly personal aspects of the lives of the respondents. This decision was reinforced by her own self-consciousness when using a tape recorder and a personal belief that other people would feel the same way. In each of the interviews, after having asked about the respondent's background information, the researcher asked all of the respondents if they minded the interview being taped, and most said they did not. However, at one interview, before the researcher turned the tape recorder off, one respondent asked for it to be turned off when she had started to talk about the psychological problems she experienced after re-entry (to be mentioned in section 4.2.5 in Chapter 4).

The ending of the interview consisted of the researcher stating: "I think I have come to understand better the factors associated with your readjustment situation and experience. Is there anything you would like to add or ask me?"

Having given the respondent the opportunity to ask any questions, the researcher formally thanked her for generously giving her time and assistance, and told her how to get in touch with the researcher if she should want to. The researcher then asked that they would agree to be contacted again in the future if necessary.

3.5.3 Conducting of in-depth interviews for the "topical, short life history"

Once the main interviews were completed, each case was examined for different or common themes and for any patterns across the cases. Three general types of coping styles were identified. An in-depth semi-structured interview approach emerged as the least intrusive and most viable method for gathering returnee women's experiences and for uncovering a range of evidence of the types of coping styles and strategies that had assisted them in making the transition back into the home setting from a foreign environment.

The potential respondents for the in-depth interviews were selected from the interviewees who had agreed to be interviewed intensively over the next few months. Then the respondents were asked to nominate suitable locations and times for interviews to be conducted.

A sample of three returning wives was selected from the thirty-five respondents who had participated in the semi-structured interviews. Several interesting features in their readjustment strategies to cope with transitional stresses were observed in these respondents when examining the transcripts from their first

interviews. Similarities and differences in their coping strategies were identified following their interviews. These were coping strategies in the sense that they were active ways of managing the readjustment difficulties, each strategy was intentional and distinctive. However, three general types of strategies were detected. They were; Reassimilators, Readjustors and Disassociators.

The three selected respondents for a "topical, short life history" were interviewed at several different times during the year. The purpose of the successive interviews was to produce a descriptive narrative of each returnee wife's coping and readjustment process. Although each of the three respondents might not be necessarily representative of each of the coping styles, each case included analysis of what type of readjustment strategies she had employed, why she had employed that particular type of strategy and how she had actually coped with the transitional stresses.

Open-ended questions focusing on the returnee wives' readjustment strategies were asked in the interviews. An open-ended question, unlike in the structured interviews, established the territory to be explored whilst allowing the interviewees to give additional insights in any direction they wanted. The interviews included some semi-structured questions to allow the researcher some latitude in proceeding with follow-up questions based on judgments made during the interview. As in the semi-structured interviews, these interviews were tape recorded, with the respondents' permission, and supplemented by note taking.

3.6 Ethics, Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Ethics

One of the important aspects of qualitative research is a special consideration of ethical issues. In this study, the primary ethical issues arising from the application of the method were: informed consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality and the possibility of causing distress to the respondents.

Informed consent

In this study, as stated in section 3.5.2, all of the interview participants had been informed of the nature of the research, and what their involvement would entail. This information was given at the time of arranging the interview when the researcher made an initial introduction to the potential respondents via telephone (except in the case of School C, when it was given at the time of the first meeting). Then a letter explaining the purpose of the research, providing the rationale for the study and giving brief details of what it would involve together with an invitation for their co-operation was sent to each of the respondents. They were notified that this project would form the basis of a dissertation for the interviewer's PhD course. At the beginning of each interview, the respondents were again verbally given information about the purpose of the research, what would happen to the data (including possible use in reports or publications) and how it could benefit them. Any questions regarding the project were dealt with prior to the interview.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher went to lengths to ensure that the anonymity and confidentiality of the informants were maintained. The interviewees were told that any information given to the researcher would be used only for the purposes of the research. Within the present research, any potentially identifying information was removed. In particular, some of the wives did not seem to want their husbands' companies to know that they had agreed to be interviewed. Several respondents asked the researcher not to record the names of their children's schools.

They were reassured that the interview was being conducted solely to understand how they perceived their overseas experiences as a returnee wife and how they coped with their difficulties and problems after returning to Japan. The focus would be their own experiences, thoughts and feelings. The transcript of the tape would be available to those participants if they so wished, to check for accuracy. Otherwise, the tapes and transcripts would be destroyed after analysis and submission of the thesis.

Possibility of causing distress to the respondents

As informants begin to share more experiences and feelings with an interviewer, they tend to forget their inhibitions and reveal aspects of themselves which they would ordinarily keep hidden (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998:99). There is a possibility of upsetting respondents by letting them talk about their personal difficulties and problems. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) suggested that researchers must ensure that they refrain from making negative judgments about their informants. During the interviews, the researcher had to actively reassure the respondents that they

were "all right" in her eyes. The researcher tried to constantly show her understanding and sympathy: "I know what you mean," "I understand how you felt," when they had given some detail about their personal or embarrassing experiences. Her ability to remain detached was impeded by her personal reaction to the respondents' problems. There were many occasions when the researcher began to sympathise with their problems and difficulties, which gave a methodological consideration in terms of subjectivity, to be discussed in the next section 3.6.2.

3.6.2 Validity and reliability

Some qualitative researchers have argued for different standards for judging the quality of research and have rejected the framework of reliability and validity that are commonly accepted in more quantitative researches. They have suggested new criteria for judging qualitative researches. For instance, Merriam (1988) suggests that notions of validity and reliability need to be grounded in the worldview of qualitative research and she presented three major aspects of rigor, which are; internal validity, reliability and external validity (generalisability). More recently, Guba and Lincoln (1989:236-43) proposed four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research and explicitly offered these as an alternative to more traditional quantitatively-orientated criteria. They felt that their four criteria better reflected the underlying assumptions involved in much qualitative research. They are; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity,

respectively in traditional criteria for judging quantitative research). These are discussed below.

Credibility (Internal validity)

The credibility criterion considers whether the findings or inferences correctly map the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It refers to establishing whether the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In other words, credibility asks the question, "How consistent are the findings with reality?" Most literature agrees that internal validity is a strength of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers can increase the credibility of their data by using different strategies. These may include the use of multiple researchers, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods of data collection to confirm the emerging findings (Denzin, 1970). This is known as 'triangulation'. The credibility of this present research was enhanced by collecting data at different times (half of the respondents were interviewed twice with the second session taking place two to four months after the first) and from different locations and sources (returnee schools, networks and corporations). If researchers find that the same patterns occur when they collect data at different times or locations, then that indicates that their data is probably real and not the effect of chance (Denzin, 1989).

In this study, there seemed to be no particular patterns which appeared which depended on the site from which the data was collected (i.e., private vs. state elementary schools, large business organisations vs. voluntary networks). As previously mentioned, the researcher interviewed the informants at different

times. Taking the data collected from the informants, together with the researcher's tentative interpretations of the data, back to the informants from whom it was derived and asking if the interpretations were plausible, can also help to ensure that the interpretation of "reality" being presented is as "true" to the phenomenon as possible.

It should be noted that, in terms of the credibility of the data, Mrs. T7's (MI34) case gave the researcher a methodological issue to be considered. That is, the possible discrepancy between what people say and what they do. This case, described in detail in section 4.2.5 in Chapter 4, suggested the possibility for the existence of multiple interpretations of the interview data. The methodological guidelines, no matter how accurately they were followed, could not account for possible differences in what the respondent said and what she actually experienced, in the judgement of the researcher. The researcher tried to look closely at the data and employed multiple sources (e.g., arranging several interviews at different times with Mrs. T7, inquiring of other respondents who had known Mrs. T7) to improve the accuracy of data and its interpretation.

This study also dealt with the 'politeness barrier', (people often prefer not to say negative, unpleasant or critical things unless they have specific complaints), by using the vignettes technique described in section 3.3.2 in this chapter. The informants tended to say that most things were "all right", and presented a feigned appearance. This strategy could help with the "politeness barriers" in certain groups of respondents, such as those who were rather quiet, shy or passive, and not willing to voice their own experiences or opinions.

Transferability (External validity)

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Lack of transferability or over-generalisation of the findings is the most frequent criticism of the qualitative research methods since the qualitative researchers rarely select a random sample, which would allow them to generalise to the larger population from which the sample was selected.

Intensive comparative study of a small number of individuals requires a different method from that of questionnaire surveys and leads to different results. In the present research, no attempt was made to produce general factual statements about a wide population of returnee wives by studying the sample, i.e., the generalisability of the results was intentionally restricted.

Obviously there were certain limitations in the use of voluntary networks for supporting returnee children and special readjustment schools as sampling frames. Those who belong to support networks and those who send their children to special readjustment schools may be more aware of their situations and readjustment problems. To select respondents from organisations such as these involves a degree of bias, mainly due to the fact that the wives had selected themselves to some extent, i.e., joined the groups. The returnee wives listed in these organisations were only a small fraction of the total number of such people in Japan. Since this study was based on the self-selected, voluntary participation of returnee wives, it is impossible to say, for example, that because a certain proportion of the wives went through readjustment difficulties, that same of all

Japanese returnee wives will experience the same degree of difficulties upon re-entry.

Throughout the study, all descriptive material is intended to refer only to the set of research wives. The interpretations presented in this study may be valid for other returnee wives besides the sampled wives described here, or they may not. Thus, a serious shortcoming of using these sources would be the lack of information on the general attitudes and perceptions of returnee wives. The investigation of several groups could not hope to cover the whole scope of returnee wives in Japan. As was mentioned in the earlier section, some returnee wives were secretly and quietly suffering from their readjustment difficulties. Thus, in many cases it would be impossible to determine whether the results of this research indicate general readjustment problems and fully represent the readjustment processes that returnee wives might experience. These gaps in the data made it difficult to accurately determine the precise meanings of the various problems among them.

Several authors (e.g., Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1988; Guba & Lincoln, 1981); have suggested some strategies to be employed to strengthen this aspect of qualitative research. The transferability of this research was addressed by the comparison of the sample with demographic data and by the multi-frame design described in sections 3.4.1 "Sampling criteria" (describing how typical the sample was compared with the majority of other returnee wives) and 3.4.2 "Sampling frames and sample selection procedure" in this chapter. This was a compromise of this present research, concerning the number and selection of cases to be studied. The

relatively small number of cases selected facilitated an in-depth and more 'nuanced' analysis of the pertinent issues but also limited claims of the 'representativeness' of the findings. However, the choice of cases was clearly more important than the number of cases.

Transferability (External validity) seemed to be most problematic for this study in terms of statistical generalisation based on the quantitative paradigm. The data sample of this study was based on those who voluntarily participated in the interview with the primary researcher. The explication of difficulties and strategies examined was therefore restricted, and results may not be readily transferable to other contexts. A broader range of more sophisticated data is needed with regard to the variations in terms of demography and geography, and labour force participation. Future studies of readjustment could therefore benefit from drawing on a broader sample.

Dependability (Reliability)

The traditional quantitative view of reliability is based on the assumption of replicability or repeatability. Essentially it is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. However, researchers cannot actually measure the same thing twice—by definition if we are measuring twice, we are measuring two different things. Instead of reliability, one can strive for what Lincoln and Guba (1985:288) called "dependability" or "consistency". They suggested that the real question for qualitative researchers is not whether the results of one study are the same as the results of a second or third study, but whether the results of a study are

consistent with the data collected. What a qualitative researcher strives for is consistency and dependability, a sort of internal reliability in which the findings of an investigation reflect, to the best of the researcher's ability, the data collected (Merriam, 1988). As with credibility (internal validity), there are strategies qualitative researchers can use to ensure greater consistency.

Dependability in measurement for this study was addressed by the use of verbatim accounts of the interviews or direct quotations in field notes. In this study, the dependability was also increased by describing the changes that occurred during the process of research design and data gathering, and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study. The researcher also kept detailed records of the data collected and analysis procedures. The transcript of each interview was created from the audiotape of the interview and could be provided to interviewees for verification or amendment. The researcher tried to increase the reliability of this study by attentively listening to what the respondents said, being diligent in the note-taking throughout the interviews and in close observation, recording everything that respondents did or said, regardless of whether the researcher approved of it or understood it.

Confirmability (Objectivity)

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. It is the process of checking interpretations and conclusions for researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The basic technique for ensuring confirmability is developing a record of data collected (such as recorded cassette tapes, transcriptions, interview notes and secondary sources) to allow

other researchers to observe a chain of evidence. This audit trail would allow an external observer to trace the logical progression of reasoning from the evidence presented to the conclusions drawn (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994).

Qualitative research paradigm believes that the researcher is an important part of the process. The researcher cannot be separate from the topic/people being studied, and researcher bias enters into the picture even if the researcher tries to stay out of it (Mehra, 2002). Subjective interpretations are generally acceptable within the qualitative research tradition since the researchers cannot separate their own feelings and opinions from the research question and the data. However, if a qualitative researcher introduces a bias, that contaminates the observations and interpretations, then the validity of the findings is undermined. Constraints, difficulties and limitations during the data gathering process could possibly alter its results, provoking some bias.

It should also be stated that the researcher herself is a returnee wife and mother. The researcher's personal contacts in the schools, networks and corporation facilitated access to participants as well as influencing the interpretations of the data. The researcher saw this as an asset, which might have contributed to a richer and more accurate description of the experiences of the returnee wives. Nonetheless, bias may be a concern. The researcher had a significant background in the field of inquiry as a returnee wife and this may have introduced unintentional biases in the conduct of interviews. During the interviews, being a returnee wife herself, the researcher wanted to tell the respondents that she understood what they were feeling because she had had similar experiences. At

the time, she thought that expressing these thoughts and feelings would have biased the interviews. They might also have influenced the coding, categorising and analysing of the data. Even so, the researcher considers that often she did not detract from the quality of data by showing understanding and empathy with the interviewees.

Nevertheless, the researcher strived to maintain confirmability (objectivity) in this study by including detailed excerpts from the raw data that can be traced to original sources and by describing how the data was to be interpreted and placed into categories or conclusions. The researcher also made all the transcripts of the interviews available.

3.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 outlined and rationalised the methodologies used in this study, including the pre-pilot study and pilot study and the tentative hypotheses which emerged from these studies. The research questions and the main instruments refined from the pilot study were provided. The final research instrument, as a semi-structured format dealing with areas of perception towards overseas experience, readjustment difficulties, awareness of change as a result of living abroad, perception about Japan and thoughts about being a company-wife, was developed. The decision to used unstructured in-depth interviewing with a subset of the returnee wives, as an additional instrument, was also discussed.

The next section described the application of the method to this study. First, the sampling criteria for the respondents and the potential sampling frames for this research were described. Multiple sampling frames were employed and the administration procedures used in this study were introduced. Although the main data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, the procedure for three in-depth interviews, according to developed criteria for coping strategies, was also described. The ethical considerations in conducting the research and the reliability and validity issues were discussed in the last section.

Chapter 4 Results and Analysis

The first section of Chapter 4 provides descriptive information about the respondents and their families. The next section presents the first part of the data analysis. The results of the interviews focusing on the returnee wives' readjustment problems are collated and discussed. The second part of the data analysis will examine how various factors (host culture variables, time factors and attitudinal variables) have affected the returnee wives' readjustment difficulties and problems.

As described in Chapter 3, a pilot study was conducted to test the procedures for data gathering and analysis for the main research interviews. It served to give the interviewer an overall idea of the kinds of problems Japanese returnee wives encounter in readjusting to their home environment. Some important information and findings came from the pilot interviews and these were therefore incorporated into the main interviews. Thus it was decided that the analysis would proceed using both sets of interviews, i.e., the results from twelve pilot interviews as well as from twenty-three main interviews; a total of thirty-five interviews were therefore analysed in this chapter.

4.1 Background Information

This section provides descriptive information about the respondents and their families, including general characteristics both during and after their overseas sojourn.

4.1.1 Demographic summary of the respondents

In total, thirty-five returnee wives were interviewed varying in age from 32 to 54 with a mean age of 39.9. Age distribution was concentrated in the age groups of 35-39 and 40-44 (Table 4.1.1).

Table 4.1.1 Age of the Respondents

Age group	n	%
30–34	2	6
35–39	14	40
40–44	15	42
45–49	3	9
50–54	1	3
total	35	100

Of the thirty-five wives interviewed, nineteen of them had made their first sojourn to the U.S.A., six to England, five to Germany, one to France, one to New Zealand, one to Malaysia, one to Singapore and one to Indonesia (their first foreign assignments).

The range of lengths of first foreign assignments was from one and a half years to fourteen years. The average length of first overseas posting was 4.66 years. Eight respondents out of thirty-five had undertaken a second or third sojourn. The total length of time spent overseas by the respondents ranged from two years to fourteen years with an average length of 5.89 years.

Regarding the length of time between their return to Japan and the interviews, one respondent had been back in Japan for less than a year, six had been back for one to two years, eight had been back for two to three years, fourteen wives had

been back for three to four years and six wives had been back for more than four years. The average time since the most recent assignment was 2.64 years with a range from six months to five years.

After returning home, most families chose to live in different places from those they had left previously, mainly because of their children's educational needs. After their most recent re-entry only seven of them lived in the same place as they had lived before their departure. The majority of the respondents interviewed (n=32) lived in Tokyo and only three families lived in other areas, which were in Kanagawa prefecture.

Because of their husbands' overseas assignments, all except Mrs. S1 (PI9), who was able to keep her teaching position at an elementary school in Boston, had left their jobs. It might be surprising that after returning to Japan only two of them were in full-time employment. Nine of the wives were working part-time and six others were doing voluntary work. One respondent was a full-time graduate student working on her MBA degree.

Most of the husbands were corporate employees. Six husbands worked for manufacturers, five worked in banking (financial institutions), five in trading companies, two in gas/electricity supply companies, a service industry, a carrying trader, a securities company, a leasing company and a distributor. Others were public servants, medical doctors working for hospitals, teaching professionals, a real estate developer, a press journalist working for a newspaper office, a space scientist at National Aeronautics and Space Development in Japan [NASDJ] and

a veterinarian working for a daily farming manufacturer (n=1) (Table 4.1.2).

There were two returnee wives without children. Six wives had one child, twenty-four had two children and three wives had three children. Twelve of these 33 wives had children under five years old upon (the most recent) re-entry. The mean age of the youngest child upon (the most recent) re-entry was 7.32 years (N=31, two wives were pregnant at the time of their re-entry) and the mean age of the oldest child upon re-entry was 10.92 years old.

As far as schooling is concerned, most of those who moved to English-speaking countries with children had enrolled them in local education systems. But some of those mothers sent their children to Japanese supplementary schools, where available, at weekends to prepare for their return to Japan. Other non English-speaking locations or those places considered unsuitable for children due to harsh conditions or a lack of appropriate educational facilities had sent their children to Japanese schools. After re-entry, nearly half of the respondents who had school age children (fifteen wives) sent them to returnee schools or schools which had special courses or classes for returnee children. Only one mother sent her daughter to an international school in Tokyo.

4.1.2 Profile of the respondents

Table 4.1.2 in the next page summarises the demographic information about the interviewees.[1]

[1] A detailed profile of each of the respondents is available from the author.

Table 4.1.2 Summary of Interviewees

No.	Respon-dent	Country stayed	Length of sojourn (years)	Length of time since	Husband's company/occupation	No of child-ren	Current job status
PI1	Mrs. N1	Malaysia	5.5	3.5	Gas supplying company	2	V
PI2	Mrs. T1	U.S.A.	7	3	Space scientist (NASDJ)	2	V
PI3	Mrs. N2	France	5		Security company	2	V
		Madagascar	3				
		France	2	1			
PI4	Mrs. F1	U.S.A.	3	4	Public servant (Local public service official)	2	V
PI5	Mrs. N3	Germany	4	1	Headmaster (Elementary school)	2	F
PI6	Mrs. U1	England	2	4	Carrying trade	2	N
PI7	Mrs. K1	Indonesia	7	1	Financial institution	2	N
PI8	Mrs. O1	England	5	3	Manufacturer (Automobile)	2	V
PI9	Mrs. S1	U.S.A.	14	0.5	Teacher (Elementary school)	3	P
PI10	Mrs. K2	U.S.A.	5	3	Banking	2	P
PI11	Mrs. W	England	5	3	Trading company	2	N
PI12	Mrs. S2	U.S.A.	4	2	Veterinarian	2	N
MI13	Mrs. T2	Germany	5	5	Leasing company	1	P
MI14	Mrs. K3	U.S.A.	3	2	Manufacturer (Precision machines)	2	N
MI15	Mrs. H	England	8	4	Manufacturer (Automobile)	2	V
MI16	Mrs. Y	U.S.A.	2		Banking	2	N
		Singapore	5	3			
MI17	Mrs. F2	U.S.A.	1.5		Public servant (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	1	F
		Malaysia	3	2			
MI18	Mrs. T3	U.S.A.	2		Servicing industry	1	P
		U.S.A.	8	2			
MI19	Mrs. M1	U.S.A.	4		Manufacturer (Precision machines)	2	N
		U.S.A.	5	3			
MI20	Mrs. S3	New Zealand	3	3	Real estates developer	3	N
MI21	Mrs. T4	England	5	2	Trading company	3	P
MI22	Mrs. K4	Germany	2		Banking	2	N
		Germany	4	1			
MI23	Mrs. O2	U.S.A.	1.5		Trading company	2	N
		U.S.A.	5				
		U.S.A.	4	3			
MI24	Mrs. F3	U.S.A.	3	2	Medical doctor	2	S
MI25	Mrs. T5	U.S.A.	4	3	Manufacturer (Precision machines)	2	N
MI26	Mrs. O3	U.S.A.	4	3	Press journalist (News paper office)	2	N
MI27	Mrs. K5	Germany	4	3	Trading company	1	P
MI28	Mrs. K6	U.S.A.	14	3	Manufacturer (Food)	1	N
MI29	Mrs. T6	U.S.A.	4	2.5	Trading company	2	P
MI30	Mrs. S4	England	2	3.5	Public servant (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	0	P
MI31	Mrs. U2	U.S.A.	5	4.5	Trading company	1	N
MI32	Mrs. A	Singapore	5	1	Distribution and retail sales	2	N
MI33	Mrs. M2	Germany	6		Banking	2	N
		England	4	1.5			
MI34	Mrs. T7	U.S.A.	3	4	Electric supply company (Tokyo Dnryoku)	0	P
MI35	Mrs. O4	U.S.A.	5.5	2.5	Medical doctor	2	N

N=not working
P=part-time job
F= full-time job
S=Full time student
V=voluntary work

4.2 Analysis of the Interview Data I: Readjustment difficulties identified

4.2.1 Analysing the interview data

A continuous dialogue between data gathering, identification of important themes and successive coding and analysis is a distinct trait of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Denzin, 1970; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). These processes are supposed to occur simultaneously throughout the course of the research. However, as Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggested, the substantive analysis actually happens after the researchers leave the field and have more time to carefully go over their data. This was the case in this study. Some analysis took place during the interviews. For instance, the interviewer continually made decisions regarding the themes to pursue with certain respondents, when to probe into areas which came up during the interview that seemed to be significant to the respondents and how to elaborate on important points to encourage further responses.

The subsequent detailed analyses necessary for conceptualisation occurred primarily after interviewing was completed and the interview transcripts were ready to be examined and coded. The actual data for this study consisted of the complete transcripts from twenty-two respondents, partial transcripts from the remaining thirteen respondents and analytic notes the researcher had written during both the course of the interviewing and the process of writing up the analysis. The decision to limit the transcription process occurred during the

research because of the large amount of accumulated data and time constraints. The researcher was confident that the major categories had already been identified, which complied with the construction of the theoretical frameworks from previously transcribed data. In the analytic notes, the researcher attempted to put down the analytic process and included such information as personal reactions to the respondents and how the interviews had proceeded, also noting new themes that emerged over the course of the interviews.

The method of analysis consisted of a combination of 'Modified Analytic Induction' (Becker, 1963; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Robinson, 1951) and the 'Constant Comparative Method' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The former seeks to develop an early definition (theory) from the data and then check the subsequent data against this theory to test for fit—i.e., Does the initial understanding of an individual's experience support the results found in subsequent data? If not, how might the individual's experience be explained in a way that would account for the new data? The ultimate purpose of this procedure is both a comprehensive and refined conceptualisation of respondents' experiences. In the analysis of this study, the analytic induction procedure was used to begin the set of themes (categories/hypotheses) reflected in the pilot interviews. As was stated in Chapter 3, the ten broad themes initially created from this procedure were:

1. Readjustment difficulties
2. Integration into the foreign culture
3. Time factors
4. Willingness to move abroad

5. Levels of desire to return home
6. Attitude to overseas experience
7. Value change as a result of living abroad
8. Thoughts about being a company-wife
9. Perceptions about Japan
10. Coping strategies

The Constant Comparative Method may be used to study multiple sources of data and was appropriate for this research as it facilitated multiple comparisons of individuals' experiences. This method enables the researcher to focus on key issues (themes) that emerge from the data and become categories of interest. The researcher analysed the transcribed data by first examining the content of the data from one interview to find out if there were any words, phrases or sentences that were related to the returnee wives' readjustment difficulties. The researcher repeated the procedure for all the remaining interviews and compared the data obtained. Several categories were subsequently defined, with emphasis then placed upon examining the diversity of the data within categories. Contrasts were identified between the different patterns, taking into consideration the returnee wives' differing backgrounds and psychological and social situations. The data was also analysed in order to find the patterns or similarities (if any) between the respondents and to find examples which demonstrated the intensity of their readjustment problems. That is, the researcher had to balance the generalisations arising from the data and an awareness of the uniqueness of individual experiences. The relationships between categories were then identified, with analysis and examination concentrated on

those that were most significant. The combination of the two related approaches proved useful as it enabled a comprehensive examination of multiple aspects of each individual's experience as well as an understanding of how each individual's experience was both similar to and different from every other individual's experience.

The analysis required a review or elaboration of some concepts of readjustment difficulty as was discussed in the literature review. It also included the researcher's personal interpretations of the reasons for the returnee wives having to face the reintegration difficulties.

4.2.2 Readjustment difficulties identified

Readjustment difficulties were identified mainly as a result of direct questioning by the interviewer, "What were your main areas of difficulty, if any, after returning home—children's school readjustment? Physical environment? Family relations? Peer group social relations? Job relations? Other psychological reactions?" The respondents' answers to the interview questions regarding readjustment difficulties were content-analysed using key words and phrases that adequately captured the various re-entry experiences. Then the individual's degree of overall readjustment was classified as either "No readjustment problems", "Minor readjustment problems" or "Severe readjustment problems". The frequency in each category is shown in Table 4.2.1.

In order to examine the specific aspects of difficulties in their readjustment, the

Table 4.2.1 Retrunee Wives' Perceived Level of Readjustment Difficulty

Readjustment Problems	Frequency
No readjustment problems	3
Minor readjustment problems	24
Severe readjustment problems	8
total	35

respondents were asked to report if they had experienced any psychological or interpersonal difficulties in the more detailed areas including relating to previous peers, relating to relatives and job related issues (Table 4.2.2). Amongst those who reported that they had minor or severe readjustment problems (other than those related to their children's schooling), the most common responses indicated problems in relating to previous peers and reintegrating with social circles. More serious problems included several cases related to job and career issues (the reintegration into labour forces will be discussed in Chapter 5), three cases of psychological disorders, and some cases related to contact with relatives. Nearly half the respondents reported that they found it difficult to get used to the physical environment, including the poor housing conditions and public facilities. Many mentioned that they became more critical towards the Japanese people's mentality, such as the lack of a sense of public manners, indecisiveness, conformity and narrow-mindedness (which will be discussed in 'Perceptions about Japan' in Section 4.3.3).

Most of the respondents, at one time or another, encountered readjustment problems in one or more of these areas. From what has been said in the section describing the interviews, it should be apparent that for the most part the returnee wives in this sample encountered several discouraging readjustment

Table 4.2.2 Perceived Difficult Areas of Readjustment and Re-entry Problems
(Other than children's educational/social readjustment)

Readjustment Difficulties	frequency
Relating to old friends/social circles/peer groups	26
Relating to relatives/in-laws	8
Physical environment (poor housing conditions, overcrowding, reduction in standard of living, poor public facilities, etc.)	17
The Japanese mentality (nosey, indecisive, lacking a volunteer spirit, materialistic, spendthrift, inflexible, lacking individuality, superficial, bad public manners, conformity, narrow mindedness, etc.)	19
Problems in starting/restarting their own career	3
Physical /psychological health problems	3

(Multiple responses)

situations either in their children's or their own personal readjustment. Other than their own readjustment, the wives frequently mentioned their children's educational problems, due in part to the competitive nature of the Japanese school system. There is a commonly shared belief that those who have stayed overseas will be disadvantaged in the education race and will have more difficulty entering the good universities (Goodman, 1990). It is the effect on their children that concerns wives most. Whilst the children are very young, most wives agree that the effect is not harmful. They make and forget friends easily and there is little worry about their academic performance. As they reach upper grades in elementary schools however, a transfer can become a crisis in terms of their psychological reintegration as well as their academic readjustment. One returnee wife recalled: "Every time my daughter made a place for herself at school with the other kids, we'd move and she'd spend the next year trying to settle in at another school. On the last re-entry, when she was at junior high school, she had a nervous breakdown. She felt sure she was an outsider."

In this study, the focus was on the returnee wives' own social readjustment, i.e., how their absence might have affected their reintegration into the home environment. The interview data indicated that most of the wives were apprehensive about entering or resuming interpersonal relationships with others in the home culture. Thus perceived changes regarding Japan's physical aspects, i.e., the discomforts due to the comparative decrease in living conditions and the Japanese mentality were less important elements for most of the returnee wives and appeared to cause only minor problems.

From the perspective of the sojourner, the interpersonal aspects of re-entry are the most important features of the process for reintegrating with their old culture and society. Possibly the area in which their personal readjustment was most difficult was in their reintegration into their primary relationships, i.e., their peers and their close relatives who had lived all their lives in Japan.

Only three returnee wives, Mrs. H (MI15), Mrs. S3 (MI20) and Mrs. K4 (MI22) reported that they had fairly successful social readjustment and had no problems in any of these areas. This success may be partly due to differences in their expectations and experiences of home. For Mrs. H (MI15), Mrs. S3 (MI20) and Mrs. K4 (MI22), the home environment was generally an object of relief and comfort to be regained with hopeful expectations. For the majority however, the same environment was more of a problematic reality in which they had to re-establish their new lives. Unlike the three wives who had no re-entry problems, the majority experienced greater pressure to conform to the norms and behavioural patterns of individuals with whom they were interacting. Consequently, they

might have experienced a greater sense of frustration during this period. This issue will be explored further in the next chapter.

4.2.3 Relating to old friends and non-returnee mothers

Descriptively, the interview data revealed an ambivalent attitude towards anticipated reintegration with respect to peers and relations among the overwhelming majority of the respondents. There was a general response from returnee wives that they felt awkward or uneasy and they sometimes had trouble re-entering social groups and maintaining relationships. Table 4.2.3 presents some of the words which the returnee wives used to describe their awkward situations when relating to their old friends. The following are typical comments from those who found it difficult to relate to their old peers:

> They profess interest in things abroad, but they really aren't interested in [my experiences]...They are more interested in filling me in on what I missed while I was away from Japan. I was worried that there might be gaps in my understanding...and actually I wasn't able to pick them up...
>
> (Mrs. F1, PI4)

> My old friends seemed not to be too clear on where I had been or what I did there [the U.S.A.] or why it was important...I felt I was in a void and couldn't relate to the day to day matters of my friends. I couldn't get excited about the things that stirred them.
>
> (Mrs. T1, PI2)

Table4.2.3 Descriptive Words
(used to describe the relationship with old friends)

depressed	incongruous	uneasy
out-of-place	uncomfortable	difficult to mingle
disappointed	isolated	different
uncomfortable	sense of loss	withholding
nervous	communication gap	
alienated	out-of-tune	

I found that I somehow felt rather isolated...I mean there were some times when I really didn't talk about my experiences. I was sort of nervous. I ended up keeping quiet about a lot of things. I came to realise that there were some things that I couldn't tell them.

(Mrs. O4, MI35)

Of course, I've experienced that 'out-of-placeness'. When I say something about my life in Germany, it sounds like boastful talk to some of my friends. I didn't mean it to be...Some of my old friends just overreact and say, "What a wonderful life you had in Germany!" and wouldn't be interested in the topic any more...They ask questions, but they don't care about the answers.

(Mrs. T2, MI13)

Most agreed that they would not mention anything good about their overseas experiences unless they were asked to do so. The reluctance in speaking about their overseas experiences arises from a fear of being considered by friends as being too 'foreign'. Or old friends might feel rejected if the returnee wives say too much about how wonderful everything was overseas. For example, after her third

re-entry, Mrs. O2 (MI23) was more circumspect than before because she had realised that some of her friends were not happy to hear about her enjoyable life in America. She described her situation as follows:

> Every year, I write Christmas cards to my friends, to those whom I don't see often and don't keep in touch with regularly, to let them know how I've been getting on and what I'm up to. I thought most of them were looking forward to receiving cards like those. And of course, I mentioned about my life in the U.S. from time to time. However, I happened to know that one of my friends thought that my card along with the letter sounded rather boastful. I'd realised that some people think in a different way. I thought I'd sent my cards to those friends and relatives who would understand my experience. Ever since then, I try not to say anything about my American life, when I think it's not appropriate, as some of them will take it differently from what I intend to say...
>
> (Mrs. O2, MI23)

In some cases, their old friends who stayed 'behind' may feel threatened by the returnees or jealous of their experiences. They may resent that the returnees had an opportunity they did not have or regret passing up a similar opportunity. Or the returnees may make them feel inadequate or inferior by what the sojourners have seen and done.

Several other wives reported that their re-entry problems were related to the development of new friendships with other mothers in the area. Establishing new friendships is not an easy task in a small tight community. As most local mothers

spend their whole life in the same area, it is much harder for newcomers to get into the network of a group, which has already been established.

> Everyone seemed unfriendly. It was impossible to break into the groups and make friends. They seem to visit each other and let their children play together, but I was never invited. I knew no one and it was obvious they did not want to know me.
>
> (Mrs. W, PI11)

> To my surprise, it was difficult to make new friends. I felt rather alienated and I was a bit depressed because I felt the chances to meet and talk with other mothers were limited...the fact is that it was difficult to make friends within my own country. I could not make friends with other mothers at my children's school...It seemed to me they'd already formed a group.
>
> (Mrs. O1, PI8)

Returnee mothers' perceived differences may also lead to their isolation from other mothers in the community. Some wives mentioned that they felt uneasy in relating to non-returnee mothers:

> I felt out of everything when I first came back. I didn't know what to wear, what to talk about, or how to get into the tight cliques that had formed from people who had been together all their lives.
>
> (Mrs. N1 PI3)

Unexpectedly, I realised that I irritate people around me. When I happen to mention that my child is at a returnee school...They say, "Oh, you've been in America?" I probably sounded a bit boastful. They may think of me as being haughty or giving myself airs...

(Mrs. F2, MI17)

The friends that I keep are my real friends. I'm not very keen on close friendship with those whom I came to know through my children, the native mothers. I've found it a bit difficult to mingle so I've been careful not to say, 'In America, such and such happens'. I try to choose appropriate topics when I see other mothers at my children's nursery school...I suppose it's difficult for those who've never lived in a foreign country to understand what I'd gone through in the States.

(Mrs. F3, MI24)

One wife who was aware of differences in her social relational patterns in Japan before her departure and after her re-entry reported this feeling as follows:

People here had been living their own lives. They'd been carrying on without me for three years. My absence was sort of being taken for granted, and it was natural for them not having me around. I suppose it was disturbing to them that I happened to come back there all of a sudden...Things are not the same as they used to be, I felt that our relationships were different from those we had before...In a sense, it was a feeling of loneliness or alienation that I mean to say...

Mrs. K3 (MI14) had been living back in Japan for twenty months at the time of the interview. She was established in her new home, seemed well liked by her associates and appeared to have a number of close friends around her. However, she said she was always conscious of an alienated sort of feeling—of being only one amongst many native mothers. "Readjustment" to her implied the resolution of personal problems, and her feelings of alienation and loneliness remained with her even though she participated successfully in her original society.

The lack of understanding and of cross-cultural experience of the other Japanese who look over, perceive, interpret and judge the behaviour of the returnees as against their tacit rules, collectively contribute to the intensity of the re-entry adjustment. As Japanese human relationships strive to preserve harmony, a returnee mother might be perceived as someone who may disturb this stability. If they are different from others, they will be left out of the group.

Most returnee wives came to know other returnee mothers through their children's schools or supporting networks. They could find similarities in each other through their experiences as returnee wives and mothers. They found clear distinctions between old friends and the returnee mothers who had more personal characteristics in common. Sharing the returnee wife or returnee mother identity was a means by which the informants could establish a threshold of commonality amongst themselves and their "company-wife and returnee mother" experiences.

4.2.4 Relating to relatives

Most of the respondents returned to Tokyo but live far away or separately from their in-laws. For these, the relationship with their in-laws is not a big problem. Mrs. K4's (MI22) case is exceptional as she gets on extremely well with her in-laws, especially her husband's mother, who lives nearby. She said she missed them while she was in Germany. Since returning to Japan, she often visits them with her children. Her relationship is quite unusual as many returning wives who have been away from Japan and out of touch with their in-laws feel strained by the relationships with their extended families. Mrs. K4 (MI22) considered that she was the sort of person who always wants to have somebody nearby to rely on.

Several respondents who live close to their extended families, such as Mrs. M1 (MI19), reported difficulties in their relationships with their in-laws. Mrs. M1 (MI19) has been living with her husband's parents in their two-family house in Tokyo since returning to Japan but feels frustration with the traditional Japanese extended family system and complex obligations, especially in relating to her mother-in-law. Mrs. M1 (MI19) confided, "In the U.S.A., I was free of their meddling." As she is the wife of an eldest son, she is expected to have the closest contact with her parents-in-law after returning to Japan. She complained of the feeling of being constantly on display and being monitored by her in-laws on return. Shortly after Mrs. M1's (MI19) re-entry, her parents-in-law told her, "Don't think that you will be free to go out or work outside home leaving your children to us. Just don't rely on us to baby-sit your daughter..." She felt that it sounded as if they were threatening her and that she was being tested to see if she

had become too selfish. Mrs. M1 (MI19) also said, "I felt as though they were trying to find fault with a 'spoilt' daughter-in-law who was, to them, ignorant of 'family ways'." She complained that her obligations to her in-laws had become a terrible burden. For a returnee wife like Mrs. K4 (MI22), moving away from her extended family and friends might be devastating, but the same move might be a relief for others like Mrs. M1 (MI19).

Mrs. O3 (MI26) also said that she found her relationship with her in-laws annoying. Her husband's mother lives in Tokyo. She also found strained feelings in relating to her, as she had to go through a lot of formalities and follow customs correctly.

> Shortly after we returned, we all attended the 7th memorial ceremony for my husband's father, as we had missed it on the previous occasion, I didn't understand what was going on though. I had forgotten the custom. I didn't know how I was supposed to behave at such ceremonial occasions and did some things wrongly. I made some embarrassing mistakes and I realised again that our own free life was over...
>
> (Mrs. O3, MI26)

Mrs. U2 (MI31) also reported a problem in associating with her in-laws after returning and she said she had felt quite relieved while they had been away from Japan.

> I was no longer bound by the annoying and complicated relationships among

the extended families. We are expected to regularly visit his parents in Kanagawa prefecture, as it is not very far from here, particularly during our summer holidays. Even though my husband can take only a few days off work, we have to spend most of our time at their place, which rather annoys me every year. I realised we could no longer have whole holidays just for ourselves...Although my husband travelled a lot in the States, I had many chances to accompany him when he went on his business trips, and we were able to spend time together during the trips or I could do something on my own. We visited many places all over America. That sort of thing will never happen again, I suppose...

(Mrs. U2, MI31)

Mrs. A (MI32) conceded that just being geographically separated from her husband's relatives made things easier for her. Immediately after their re-entry, the family had stayed at her husband's parents' house for a while. During that time, she felt tense as she describes:

We tend to worry about each other, how we treat each other, what they think and we worry about what has been said, that sort of thing...

(Mrs. A, MI32)

Although Mrs. F3 (MI24) does not live close to her in-laws, when the researcher asked her if she had had any difficulty with her husband's parents-in-law, she said the relationship was a bit annoying. As they live relatively far away, her in-laws do not interfere with her life. However, they informed her that, whilst the family

had been in the U.S.A., her children had missed a series of ceremonial occasions. Since re-entry, they now keep an eye on her to make sure they do not miss any more. She said they seemed to be trying to make up for the loss while the family had been away. Although the parents say positive things about her continuing graduate study, she says:

> It's only lip service. I doubt if they encourage me sincerely... I'm sure they want me to concentrate on my roles as a mother and a wife.
>
> (Mrs. F3, MI24)

The relatives expect to see the returnees more often 'now that there is no excuse'. Grandparents may feel that as they have not seen enough of their grandchildren and returnee parents cannot use distance as an excuse not to visit (Stori, 2001:36). As the families are back in Japan, there is no reason for the grandparents to wait until the next major holiday for a visit. Returnee wives may feel that they must start to shoulder a greater share of family responsibilities and obligations again, as Mrs. O2 (MI23) stated, to compensate for all the time they were away.

Mrs. S4 (MI30) was not annoyed with the relationships with her in-laws. Her husband's parents live in Kyoto (300 miles from Tokyo). But she reported that relatives on her mother's side did not understand the difficulties of living abroad and just thought they had fully enjoyed their life overseas. She said she once received several unpleasant remarks from one of her cousins about their foreign life and her husband's promotion after re-entry.

Another factor about re-entry is that family problems which the returnee wife may have left behind her when she left Japan may resurface upon re-entry. Mrs. T7's (MI34) mother-in-law had not been well before they left for the States. Whilst they were away, her condition took a turn for the worse. Mrs. T7 (MI34) felt guilty for not being able to visit her mother-in-law and consequently worked extra hard to look after her husband's mother after returning to Japan. The couple lived close to the mother and Mrs. T7 (MI34) tried to help her out as much as possible. It was a hard task and she said it gave her a lot of stress. When she worked for NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai [Japan Broadcast Network]), she was engaged in producing a programme about the provision of help and support to the elderly by their families. She said she used to think that she had some knowledge in that area and knew what to do but things were not going as she had expected. It was far more difficult to look after and deal with the patient on a daily basis. It certainly had an impact on her relationships with her other relatives. She remarked:

> It changed the relationship with my husband's brother. We often had arguments because of our differences in opinion regarding looking after her. It was the most difficult experience after returning to Japan. I often thought if it had been in the United States, things would have been different as they have more practical systems and facilities which you can rely on to attend to the old people although it will cost you more. On the other hand, our society assumes that there is always one woman in the family who has plenty of time to do things around the house and look after her extended family. And she is the one who should look after the elderly in her family. She is expected to do it on her

own without other members of her family and is not supposed to ask for external help. In our case, I was the one, even though I worked outside home. I was the first one to be called by the hospital and to listen to what the doctor said...

(Mrs. T7, MI34)

Being away from Japan or out of touch weakened the wives' ties both with other Japanese and with Japanese customs. If returning wives do not pay attention to the significance and importance of Japanese customs and ceremonies, they may not be accepted by others and they may feel isolated. The respondents all realised that they should have a general sensitivity towards the obligations of relationships in their extended families. Returning wives who have spent significant periods away from Japan or out of touch are faced with stressful feelings concerning their human relationships. Not only in relating to their relatives, but also on ceremonial occasions and in situations having complex obligations.

4.2.5 Other psychological problems

There were several wives who did not talk about or name specific re-entry problems but reported that they had sunk into a mental depression or developed other mental disorders after returning to Japan.

Mrs. K5 (MI27): Mental depression

During the first three months after returning to Japan, Mrs. K5 (MI27) had become completely inactive. Her friend tried to introduce her to new hobbies and took her on outings when possible, but couldn't stimulate her interest. After 6-8 months had passed without improvement and she still could not understand the reason for her lack of enthusiasm, Mrs. K5 (MI27) was recommended to a mental hospital. There she was examined and the doctor diagnosed a mild depression. She was prescribed a course of medicine to take at home and was instructed to visit the hospital for checks once a week.

Mrs. K5 (MI27) said that she was not sure why she had felt so depressed and had no idea what had directly caused her problem. She talked about it with her husband but this led to even greater feelings of alienation and isolation. She said she felt rejected.

> He said he understood, though I doubted it. He didn't think it was very serious. No wonder, as he was in a totally different situation. He had to take care of his own business, I mean his work, as our income had started to reduce when we came back. He had no time to be sympathetic...I have talked to other returnee mothers who have gone through a similar experience...If someone had just told me that what I was feeling was normal, and that it would pass, I could have handled it better. One day, some of us (her returnee friends) sat down together and cried about how we missed our overseas lives. But that's OK. We see each other regularly now.
>
> (Mrs. K5, MI27)

As Mrs. K5 (MI27) described, the lack of understanding of people around her

intensified her readjustment difficulty. Although it has been three years since she returned to Japan, she still misses a lot of her previous life in Germany as she had associated well with the local people, made some good friends and adjusted well to the foreign environment.

Mrs. K5 (MI27) said she became very despondent at the thought that she would have to find something that would keep her moving forward. Three years after her re-entry, Mrs. K5 (MI27) started working outside as a full-time shop assistant at a jewellery store in Tokyo.

Mrs. T5 (MI25): Claustrophobia

Mrs. T5 (MI25) asked the researcher to turn off the tape recorder when asked about her readjustment and the problems she experienced after re-entry. She said it was a bit embarrassing to talk about her problem, claustrophobia.

Immediately after re-entry, her family moved into a company house in Shinagawa ward, which was very close to the city centre in an urban housing area. After her children had settled in their new school, she felt quite relieved. However, at that time her problem started. One day at a supermarket, she started breaking into a cold sweat. As her heart was beating fast and her legs felt weak, she could not stand there any longer. Since then she was not able to go out, especially to public places filled with people, or to get on crowded trains or the underground. Every time she went out, she felt sick and began to be afraid of people and of going out. She was scared of closed or crowded places. She was very depressed during this

time and consulted a neuro-psychiatry doctor. The doctor prescribed her a tranquilliser, but the problem continued for about 6 months. During this time, she could not do anything but stay at home. Finally, they moved to Hashimoto, which is a rural area in Kanagawa prefecture, and her problem has been getting less serious. She says she is better now and less inclined to panic but still has to take the medicine regularly.

Mrs. T5 (MI25) was not entirely clear about what had caused her problem. There were several things she claimed to have learned from the experience. She assessed that it may have been due to the move between two drastically different physical environments. Whilst she was in New York, she was surrounded by open spaces and there was a lot of greenery. The over-crowding everywhere in Japan made her sick, she said. But she realised the meaning behind something another company-wife, who was her superior, had told her before she returned to Japan. She had said that things are a lot more difficult when readjusting to the home environment. Mrs. T5 (MI25) felt so empty after her children had settled into their schools and she thought that she had to do something. However, she just did not have any idea of what to do or what she could do. She also reported that her problems might have been caused by her emptiness and loneliness as she had quite enjoyed her overseas life in New York State. Was it simply the changes in the physical environment after returning to Japan, which were characterised by overcrowding and small living spaces? Or was it due to her psychological state, which she described as a sense of loss and emptiness? Or was it rather a desire to get more consideration and attention from her husband? She said she did not know the true cause of her problems and she reported that she has not yet fully

recovered from her claustrophobia.

Mrs. T7 (MI34): Denial (A case suggested difficulties in assessing mental states)

Mrs. T7's (MI34) case gave the researcher another methodological issue to be considered, that is, the possible discrepancy between what people say and do. This case suggested the possibility for the existence of multiple interpretations of the interview data. The methodological guidelines, no matter how accurately they were followed, could not account for possible differences in what the respondent said and what she actually experienced, in the judgement of the researcher.

By looking only at the transcribed interview data, Mrs. T7 (MI34) was depicted as an 'Active Readjustor' (See Chapter 5 section 5.4). A returnee wife who adjusted self-consciously, actively and willingly to her home environment. Mrs. T7 (MI34) consistently denied any emotive content to her re-entry situations. She perceived herself as someone who had been able to cope well with the re-entry shock, which she attributed mainly to her personal characteristics. She was one of a few returnee wives to state on numerous occasions, "I'm an adaptive sort, and always take things positively, I've always been like that. Whatever I do, I do it as best I can". She reported her readjustment difficulty by saying, "Reverse culture shock? No, I didn't experience any depressive feelings after re-entry," and preferred to present a positive perception of her re-entry experience. She said:

> Although I was in an English-speaking environment while I was over there, I didn't study at all. It really made a difference when I realised that I'd got to do

something and work hard. It (returning back to Japan) gave me an opportunity to plan out my life from then on.

According to Mrs. T7's (MI34) words and transcribed initial interview data, examples of emotional difficulties during her re-entry transition were few, however, she said something which made the researcher begin to suspect that she had, in fact, had an emotive transition back home. After further examination of the interview data, which had been sorted into labelled categories, and comparisons with previous cases, the researcher was able to pick out her comments relating to depression, anxiety, and feelings of emptiness during the re-entry period.

The researcher had been wondering what the truth about Mrs. T7's re-entry experience was, and if it would be possible to reinterpret the interview data. Perhaps the researcher was not describing Mrs. T7's experience as it really was, or was even describing it in a biased way. Maybe there was something else that could be accessed with coded interview data.

There were a few examples of specific remarks that prevented the researcher from fitting Mrs. T7 (MI34) into the category of "Active Readjustors"; those returnee wives who are able to integrate their overseas experiences into their lives after re-entry and experienced few readjustment difficulties because of their conscious efforts. The specific remarks were:

1. In the descriptions provided by Mrs. T7 (MI34) of her overseas experiences, it

was evident that she positively identified with her American life, as she described it as "a long vacation after 11-years of hard work":

> I could fully enjoy it because, in the States, everything looked fresh to me, even going out for shopping and to the cinema. I was able to enjoy my new life there and I really didn't get bothered by not working outside home. For the first time in my life, I was living my life without working. However, once you come back here, you're just another ordinary wife, a mere middle-aged woman...

2. Mrs. T7 (MI34) said that whilst she was in the States, she was able to learn many things just by watching TV, reading newspapers and magazines and going out with her friends. She could learn something about the country and the language from wherever she was and whatever she did. Her English language skills and communication ability developed whilst she was there. However, she described "having lost those learning opportunities" once she returned.

> I started to feel that everything here (in Japan) seemed worthless and this would not give me any opportunity for intellectual growth or satisfy my intellectual curiosity.

3. With reference to her perception about Japanese people, she was highly critical of her friends who did not express their opinion clearly. She described herself as somewhat isolated from the rest of her friends because of her straightforwardness:

I think I'm one of those outspoken people, and I was once told by an American wife, 'I found your opinion very interesting. But what about your friends? They were all quiet. I thought they agreed with me as they were smiling, but they actually disagreed, didn't they? I really have no idea what they were thinking...' I explained to her that it was to do with our culture but I wasn't able to make her understand. You've really got to have your opinion. Even if your English is not good enough, at least you can say, "I don't like it". I used to think I was the odd one out as I'd always been outspoken and talkative but I found that being chatty and straightforward was not at all bad in the States. Silence is not a virtue over there.

4. Mrs. T7 (MI34) carefully chose those with whom she could relate easily, so that she did not have to stand out or feel isolated. She herself attributed her easy reintegration into her old peers to her conscious will. This might have been the reason why she considered that her reintegration into her old peer group was easy:

Probably I was originally a bit different. I always felt I was different. I make friends with those who are not so different from me, I mean, they are a bit unique in a way too so I don't stand out among them.

These segments of Mrs. T7's (MI34) narrative match some of the characteristics of those who experienced severe re-entry adjustment, i.e., positive perception towards one's overseas experiences, critical attitude towards the home culture/people, value change as a result of living abroad and awareness of being

different (marginality).

5. As was mentioned in the previous section (4.2.4) of this chapter, Mrs. T7 (MI34) had been looking after an aged relative (her mother in-law) for a quite a long time after her re-entry. She admitted that it had changed the relationships with her other relative and made her realise some difficulties in coming home:

> Although I didn't have to worry about children's schooling etc., that experience of attending to his mother made me realise that there were a lot of things to think about...I suddenly had to face the reality...

The researcher was introduced to Mrs. T7 (MI34) by Mrs. U2, who was in the Main interview No.31. They came to know each other while they resided in Washington D.C. through the courses at George Washington University in which they had enrolled. They both came back to Japan in the same year (1997). Mrs. U2 (MI31) told the researcher that they had occasionally seen each other since then. During the second interview with Mrs. U2 (MI31), the researcher tested her amended interpretation of Mrs. T7 (MI34) as an 'Adaptive Re-entrant'. Mrs. U2 (MI31) was not surprised and responded: "I think she pretends she did not have any re-entry problems. Especially during the first six months or so, when most of her returnee friends were busy with their children..." According to Mrs. U2 (MI31), Mrs. T7 (MI34) did not remember what she had gone through during that time. Mrs. U2 (MI31) said that it was evident that Mrs. T7 (MI34) experienced a difficult re-entry as some of the other close friends of Mrs. T7 (MI34) knew that

she had started to develop a neurosis during her first year of re-entry. They said that she had recovered after a year or so when she found a job as a part-time English tutor at a private language school.

In the second interview with Mrs. U2 (MI31), which took place shortly after the second interview with Mrs. T7 (MI34), the researcher felt that insights gained during the interviews with Mrs. T7 (MI34) suggested that her words were somehow insufficient to describe the negative side of her re-entry experience.

Feeling comfortable with her perceptions of herself as an organised, adaptive, flexible person, she was unable to interpret her depressive feelings during the transition back home. The researcher assumes Mrs. T7 (MI34) would rather present herself as someone who is capable of exerting control over her transitional stress and rationalise the discrepancy between her life overseas and back home—this was seen as a functional coping strategy for re-entry.

In addition the childless status of Mrs. T7 (MI34) might have contributed to her re-entry situations. Returnee wives with children are kept busy from the moment of re-entry in placing their children at schools and arranging other educational environments for them. Very often they do not have time to worry about themselves, which makes their transition easier in a way. Without children, Mrs. T7 (MI34) might have to face her own readjustment problems immediately after her return. She said she did a lot of thinking in planning out her own life after returning to Japan. She seems to be enjoying teaching English at present, although she admitted that when she meets her friends who still work for NHK

and discusses their careers and social reputations, she is a bit envious of their success. She says, "To be honest, I sometimes wonder what if I had not given up my career...but you cannot have everything. I really enjoyed my life in the States."

4.3 Analysis of the Interview Data II: Factors affecting readjustment difficulties

From the interview data, it is generally understood that a variety of reasons influenced the returnee wives' readjustments. Most of the literature about re-entry shock has presented a general taxonomy of reasons, which identify three or four main categories or groups. For example, Martin (1984) suggested four main categories to examine in considering the factors influencing re-entrants' transitional experiences. These are: background variables, host culture variables, re-entry variables, and personality factors. Based on several other previous classifications, three main categories of factors were adopted for this study. These were considered to be potentially important in investigating the Japanese returnee wives' readjustment. They are:

1. **Host culture variables**—subdivided into the overseas location and the overall integration of the respondent into the foreign culture (the degree of involvement in the host community in comparison with the involvement in the Japanese community, and local language ability);
2. **Time factors**—subdivided into the time spent abroad, multiple periods spent abroad and the number of years which have elapsed since return;

3. **Attitudinal variables**—subdivided into willingness to move and return, attitude to overseas experience, perceived value change as a result of living abroad, thoughts about being a company-wife and perceptions of Japanese culture.

On one hand this classification brings some methodological advantages, on the other hand, it may also give rise to some constraints by artificially limiting the factors considered. In order to minimise the constraints in the analysis of the data, the researcher kept in mind that some variables from these three groups were not independent of each other. For example, one cannot separate the overseas location from the willingness to move there or the degree of involvement in the host community from the local language ability. Considering that some of these factors are generally interrelated, the classification adopted in this study was tentatively used for analytical purposes to help discover and specify the differences among and within categories, as well as the similarities.

In order to be able to determine if there was a significant difference in the overall levels of readjustment difficulty of participants, some statistical tests were performed on the sample data by using the "Statistical Package for the Social Science" (SPSS). The selection of SPSS was based on its flexibility in analysing data and its common acceptance and use in social science research. Where appropriate, comparisons were made between groups of returnee wives using the statistical tests to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the overall readjustment levels of the returnee wives in each of the subgroups of the sample. Two-group comparisons were made using 2×2 tables with the Fisher's

Exact test or, using 2×c tables (with columns more than two categories), with the Fisher-Freeman-Halton test, when the chi-square test resulted in at least one cell of the contingency table having an expected value less than five. Two-group comparisons were also made using the Mann-Whitney U test, if there was a natural ordering of the columns of 2×c tables or, for r×c tables (anything greater than 2×2), the Kruskal-Wallis test was run for group comparisons. In a 1×2 or 2×2 design, if the null hypothesis is rejected the result, it may still be possible to interpret depending on the P-value. However, in a 3×2, or 3×3 design (anything greater than 2×2) interpretation is not so straightforward. A rejection of the null hypothesis (with a sufficiently small P-value) implies that there are some differences but it is impossible to confirm these just by carrying out one Exact test. In these cases, separate 2×2 tests were carried out to identify the differences between the subset of samples in the categories. When a P-value is sufficiently small, commonly agreed standards (* for $p< 0.05$, ** for $p< 0.01$, *** for $p< 0.001$) are used to indicate statistical significance. Considering the fact that some of the wives in this study had multiple overseas sojourns and re-entry experiences, it was decided that the analysis in the following sections would be mainly conducted on the readjustment after their first foreign assignment.

4.3.1 Host culture variables

The first category of variables concerns the experiences of the company-wives in the host country. It seems that host culture variables (location and expatriate adjustment) are interrelated, and may in turn influence the re-entry experience. They are discussed together here as the host culture variables, since the nature of

the interrelatedness is not yet clear.

1) The overseas location

As can be seen in Table 4.3.1, most of the wives were located in developed nations. Two of those whose first postings were in the U.S.A. had been sent to South East Asian countries for their second assignments. Only one respondent reported having been sent to a third world location (to Madagascar for three years) on her husband's second assignment.

Table 4.3.1 Overseas Locations (For the first assignment)

Area	Frequency
United States	19
Europe	12
South East Asia	3
New Zealand	1
total	35

Location has been investigated as one of the variables influencing the adjustment to a foreign culture. It was anticipated that the location from which the sojourners return may also affect their re-entry experiences. For example, re-entry from cultures similar to the home culture might be easier than from dissimilar cultures; returning from the U.S.A. to the United Kingdom would be easier than returning from Indonesia to the United Kingdom. It seems likely that this variable may also influence the degree to which an individual absorbs the foreign culture (refer to the next section, "Involvement in local community activities" in 2), "Integration into the foreign culture").

Overseas locations are often valued differently by different respondents. In

general, English speaking countries are considered to be good postings and the other groups are considered to be hardship postings. The good postings tend to include constant communication with Japan through their husbands' companies or the Japanese networks. Being in close touch with Japan and maintaining communication might be a factor affecting the re-entry transition. It is expected that the more familiar the returnee is with changes in the home culture, the easier the re-entry will be. On the whole, the lifestyles in these developed countries are not substantially different from those in Japan. Therefore, it is possible that the wives did not have to adjust to very novel cultures or to readjust from foreign cultures.

Comparing those who returned from the U.S.A. and Europe (and New Zealand) (n=32) to those from Asian Nations (n=3), the present study found no detectable patterns among countries in terms of readjustment difficulties (Table 4.3.2). The wives' re-entry transitions did not systematically vary according to the geographic areas in a statistical sense. This may be due to the fact that only three respondents returned from Asian Nations for their first assignment. The limited variance among the respondents in terms of overseas locations may have influenced the result. It is noted that the re-entry transition may not be easy or trivial for wives even if returning from similar cultures, as all eight of the wives who experienced difficult transitions after re-entry had actually returned from the U.S.A. or European countries. The finding from this study does not support the assumption that re-entry from cultures similar to the home culture might be easier than from dissimilar cultures.

Other types of variation within the large U.S.A./Europe/New Zealand category (n=32) were tested to see if there were patterns in the levels of readjustment difficulty and if there was any common variable experienced by the eight women who had severe re-entry problems (Table 4.3.2A). First, any differences in the

Table 4.3.2 Readjustment Problems: Difference between the Locations (1)
(U.S.A./Europe vs. Asian nations)

Readjustment problems / Area	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
U.S.-Europe (and New Zealand)	3	21	8	32
Asian Nations	0	3	0	3
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.471(NS) (*df*=2, N= 35)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.912(NS)

Table 4.3.2A Readjustment Problems: Difference between the Locations (2)
(within U.S.A./Europe/NewZealand category)

Readjustment problems / Location	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
U.S.A	0	14	5	19
Europe	2	7	3	12
New Zealand	1	0	0	1
total	3	21	8	32
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.066 (*df*= 4, N= 32) Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.135				
U.S.A.	0	14	5	19
Europe	2	7	3	12
total	2	21	8	31
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.319(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 31) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.502(NS)				
U.S.A.	0	14	5	19
U.K.	1	4	1	6
total	1	18	6	25
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.346(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 25) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.364(NS)				
U.S.A.-U.K.	1	18	6	25
Continental Europe	1	3	2	6
total	2	21	8	31
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.421(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 31) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.977(NS)				

readjustment problems experienced by the returnee wives among those who had returned from the U.S.A. (n=19), from European countries (n=12) and from New Zealand (n=1) were examined. The differences approached statistical significance, i.e., there was a slight tendency that wives who had returned from the U.S.A. were more likely to experience problems after re-entry.

The analyses were repeated for other types of variation within the category by comparing different groupings of the returnee wives: those from U.S.A vs. those from European countries; U.S.A. vs. U.K. and U.S.A./U.K. vs. Continental Europe (Table 4.3.2A). The results show that differences between each pair of groups did not approach or reach the criterion for statistical significance, i.e., each group did not differ significantly from the other groups in the levels of readjustment difficulty.

Table 4.3.3 examines the wives' readjustment difficulties to see if there is a difference between the returnees from English speaking countries and those from non-English speaking countries (with respect to Anglophone cultures rather than the ability of the wives to speak English (see "Local language ability" in the next section 2), " Integration into the foreign culture"). In this study, seven wives of the thirty-five wives did not have experience of living in English speaking countries. For their first overseas assignment, twenty-seven wives of the thirty-five wives had stayed in English speaking countries. Table 4.3.3 shows the differences in readjustment related to whether the foreign location was an English speaking country or not. Again, there is no significant difference in the overall readjustment levels of those who were stationed in English speaking countries (n=27) and those

Table 4.3.3 Readjustment Problems: Difference between the Locations (3)
(English speaking countries vs. Non-English speaking countries)

Readjustment problems / English speaking countries or not	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
English speaking countries	2	20	5	27
Non English speaking countries	1	4	3	8
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.877(NS) (df= 2, N= 35)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.555(NS)

who were not (n=8). The restricted range problem may also apply in this case.

2) Integration into the foreign culture

Several previous researches (e.g., Storti, 2001; Sussman, 2002, 2000; Martin, 1984) have suggested that the amount of exposure to different cultures is also a relevant factor for the returnees' readjustment. It is assumed that those wives who were active and well-integrated in a local community would be more likely to perceive their overseas experience positively, which might in turn affect their readjustment; the more involved and integrated they become in the host society, the harder it may be to leave it behind.

Company-wives' involvement in various aspects of the host society and culture were difficult to assess. The data from this interview study provided information on several relevant indicators, which were considered to provide a possible gauge of the overall degree of integration into the foreign culture. They include the following:

- involvement in host community activities (e.g., volunteering at churches and

children's schools, taking part in recreation and hobby groups etc.;

- involvement in a Japanese community;
- level of confidence in the local language; and
- self-assessed degree of overall integration into the host culture.

Although indicators for the degree of integration into the host society are numerous and interrelated, for this study the four indicators mentioned above were examined individually to provide rudimentary indexes for the degree of integration into the host society.

Involvement in host community activities

Adjustment to the host society depends on whether a wife develops the skills necessary to participate in the host society including the ability to make new friends, particularly with the local individuals. This may help her to learn host customs and acquire the ability to feel comfortable and confident among local people. Typical responses include statements like:

> During our overseas stay in the U.S., I made some good local friends. They used to be my private tutors, though became close friends later. We worked together, cared for each other and had very good communication. I often asked for advice from them about my children's problems in their schools. We sometimes went out for picnics or shopping, and I enjoyed that kind of relationship very much.
>
> (Mrs. T1, PI2)

> I appreciate her (American friend) friendship so much. I was able to get to know other American people and learned their lifestyle through her.

(Mrs. O2, MI23)

During her sojourn in the U.S.A., Mrs. K2 (PI10) actively participated in local activities as a school volunteer, interacting closely with Americans, and completed her advanced degree in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). She had become acquainted with several American families with whom she felt welcomed and at home. Her comment was:

> I invited my neighbours in for coffee quite frequently and that friendship developed to an extent. Also I made friends with a number of people from the university I'd attended with whom I am still on intimate terms.
>
> (Mrs. K2, PI10)

Whilst the wives are abroad there are many activities in which they can participate and meet local people (e.g., local language classes, voluntary activities, sports and hobbies). In addition, the presence of a child may bring more opportunities to integrate which will also have an impact on their overseas lives. In addition to helping as school volunteers, wives volunteered their services at a church, or in women's associations. These are effective socialising agents and connect Japanese wives with the various local community activities.

Mrs. S1 (PI9), who stayed in the U.S.A. for nearly fourteen years, feels confident and positive about her overseas experience and she stated that she had more contact with the local culture and people in the local than the other company-wives. She remarked that many of the Japanese expatriate families live in communities

consisting entirely of short-term Japanese overseas residents and never venture outside these. Only a small number had any understanding of the societies beyond the 'Japanese towns' in which they lived. She said:

> If you stay in the States for a relatively short term, like one or two years, they will welcome you. But as the time goes by and you stay longer, you have to take on social responsibilities in the host society. When you send your child to a local school, you're supposed to help out at the school and support its children by doing some sort of volunteer activity. If you ignore these responsibilities, they will think of you as just a visitor...I worked as hard as I could...and I enjoyed the real pleasure of being a member of the local community...As you stay longer, people begin to see you as an ordinary member of their society and as a resident, not a visitor who will soon return to the country where they really belong...which makes you feel that you've been accepted...
>
> (Mrs. S1, PI9)

The wives' degree of involvement in the local community was assessed by examining the interview data in terms of which activities they were involved in, how frequently they participated, how long they engaged in the local activities, and how many close local friends they had. Table 4.3.4 presents the differences in the degree of readjustment difficulties by the wives' degree of involvement in the local community activities. The results indicate a slight tendency for those who participated to a greater degree in the foreign culture to have more readjustment problems than those who participated to a lesser degree. The difference is also evident between those who moderately participated in the host community and

Table 4.3.4 The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Host Community and Readjustment Problems (1)

Readjustment problems / Involvement in the host community activities	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Low	2	5	2	9
Medium	0	12	0	12
High	1	7	6	14
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.012** (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.135

Table 4.3.4A The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Host Community and Readjustment Problems (2)

Readjustment problems / Involvement in the host community activities	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Medium	12	0	12
High	7	6	13
total	19	6	25

Fisher's exact test: p= 0.015* (two-tailed) (*df*= 1, N= 25)

those who were involved in host community activities to a higher degree (Table 4.3.4A).

However, there were a few exceptional cases. For instance, Mrs. H (MI15), who participated very actively in the host community by working as a nurse at a local clinic and engaging in other voluntary activities, reported an easy transition after her re-entry. She seemed to make energetic attempts to meet local people through her voluntary activities and hobbies. However, she has made the transition back home easily, and this is clearly due to her modest and adaptive personality. She maintains the friendships developed during her stay in the U.K. but consciously decided that she would not dwell on the past years as she knew this would not lead her anywhere. She thought of her re-entry as another positive change in her life

just as she had thought when her husband had received his overseas assignment twelve years ago. Mrs. H (MI15) seems to have sufficient flexibility to integrate abroad and is able to readjust to Japan with little stress after her return.

On the other hand, there were several wives who had been involved in a foreign environment to a lesser degree but had experienced a difficult transition back in Japan. It is reasonable to think that sojourners will have more frequent contact with and greater involvement in the countries where English is the official language. Mrs. N2 (PI3) returned from France and reported that residing in a non-English speaking country had limited her opportunity to interact with the local people and to participate in community activities. Consequently, her degree of participation was low. Mrs. K1 (PI7), who had lived in several overseas locales, commented that she was more immersed in the society and culture of the U.S.A. than of Indonesia. She said:

> I had few intimate contacts with the local people, except the maid and the driver who worked for us...They were the only local people I knew well. Instead, I joined a group of Japanese women who were learning the Indonesian language and doing other hobby activities, such as drawing, tole painting, embroidery...
>
> (Mrs. K1, PI7)

Mrs. N2 (PI3) suggested that the readjustment difficulty she had experienced was related more to her career issues, so the degree of integration into the host culture did not seem to have a direct influence on her problems.

Mrs. T2 (MI25) was another wife who did not participate in local community activities but experienced a difficult re-entry. She associated mostly with the other company-wives within a Japanese circle and quite enjoyed her overseas life whilst she stayed in the U.S.A. As described in the section 4.2.5, she had started to suffer from claustrophobia after re-entry. As she herself analysed, her readjustment problems might have been due to the drastic changes in the physical environments or the emptiness and loneliness caused by the loss of close friendships, which she had developed during her stay in New York State.

Involvement in the Japanese community

Many overseas Japanese families have a tendency to form their own ethnic communities. There are whole apartment houses, sometimes whole quarters of a city in which only Japanese families live. In these communities, they feel at home; they are together with familiar faces and are freed from the strain of speaking all day in a foreign language. Berry et al. (1987) found that Korean immigrants with close Korean friends and those with access to support networks experienced less stress. The social and psychological support from a fellow nationals' network is thought to act as a buffer against the stress experienced in an unfamiliar environment. This was found in the cases of Mrs. S3 (MI20) and Mrs. T5 (MI25) in this study.

Mrs. T5 (MI25), like many other company-wives, started several hobby activities like shadowbox and tole painting in Houston, then continued her hobbies with other Japanese company-wives after moving into New York State. She made many friends from her Japanese circles and spent time with them frequently. Mostly, she

stayed with her Japanese friends, and her social networks were limited to those in the Japanese community. She reported that she did not have many chances to get to know local people or make friends with them as she lived in an area where there were many other Japanese families. Overall, her perception towards her overseas experience is quite positive and she said she really enjoyed her life overseas, especially after moving into New York State.

There is however, contradictory evidence as to whether it is effective support or not. As can be seen in the experiences of Mrs. K4 (MI22), Mrs. N2 (PI3) and other cases, fellow nationals were not reported to be a source of emotional support, rather they sometimes gave additional frustration and stress because of their exclusivity and conformity. In most Japanese communities, a wife's actions are not her "private business," but are considered to reflect deeply on her husband's company. Some felt that their Japanese contacts were excessively limited by their husband's occupations and children's schools. Several returnee wives described the tightness of the relationships within the Japanese community. For instance:

> My husband could choose whether he would work in Frankfurt or Dusseldorf. I wanted to go to Dusseldorf just because there were many Japanese families there...But after arriving I nearly had a nervous breakdown because of the homesickness and loneliness...and then I got involved with the troubles of the other wives in the company. I always felt as though I was being watched over. I was constantly wondering how I could go home...So, I was so glad when my husband sent me back to Japan to give birth to my first child. Once I went back to Japan, I really didn't want to return to Germany. I was so depressed...When

we first went there, my husband was the youngest employee in the office. There were some older members, who meddled in everything, from how to greet each other properly when we met outside to how I should dress as a company-wife...I felt like I had to keep carrying the company sign, I mean, my husband's company name, on my back...If you eat ice-cream or anything on the street, or if you wear Jeans when you are invited to somebody's house, you are being watched by somebody from the company. That will cause gossip within a day...I felt like I was bound hand and foot...

(Mrs. K4, MI22)

Most of my acquaintances were the wives of co-workers of my husband...we lived too close to each other. You are always aware that you've being watched as "Mrs. A" of "Company B".

(Mrs. F1, PI4)

I just feel the Japanese community was too insular. It was a very small world as what I'd done or said would spread all over it within a day...I always felt as though somebody was monitoring me, somebody who didn't know me very well...

(Mrs. T2, MI13)

I know it sounds a bit strange, but I think, "An enemy of the Japanese" is the Japanese themselves.

(Mrs. K3, MI14)

> Everywhere I went I'd been looked upon as 'Mrs. N3', the head teacher's wife. As we sent our children to that school, in some ways it was rather difficult to relate to the other mothers, such as mothers of our children's friends...Somehow I needed to balance the two roles...It was a bit annoying and put me under some strain and constraints...
>
> (Mrs. N3, PI5)

Mrs. N2 (PI3), reflecting on her experience in coping with other wives in France said:

> It's terrible when you are a newcomer. It's hard because you don't know your position within the circle and the expectations from the other members. You just have no idea what to do or how to behave. But you are new so you have no say... I had to accept it. I knew I was really going to feel it because they were going to push me to the limit as they did with every newcomer. I spoke to one wife about it and asked her what the best approach was and she said, "Well you seem to be quite calm and laid back...", which I am...I'm not confrontational; I'm quite quiet rather than being extremely loud...In the end, it was OK. I'd been there long enough to know that some of them are just impossible, they really are. Though you must blend in with the group somehow...
>
> (Mrs. N2, PI3)

Those wives who had been living in a Japanese community found it difficult to get away from people of their own nationality. The constraints put on them by the small Japanese communities are more likely to be evident in developing countries

where not so many Japanese families are stationed. Those families have to relate to each other more closely in order to survive in the unfamiliar environment. Indeed, Mrs. K2 (PI10), Mrs. O2 (MI23), Mrs. S1 (PI9) and several other wives who resided in English-speaking or advanced countries seemed to try to avoid a typical "Japanese ex-pats life" and constantly made efforts to integrate into the local communities. They agreed that relationships with host nationals were sometimes more effective in providing social and psychological support.

Mrs. K2 (PI10), for instance, found that many other social gatherings for Japanese company-wives were uninteresting because of their formality and she thought they only provided opportunities to meet other wives rather than local people. She had become acquainted with several American families with whom she felt welcome and at home. Her comment was:

> Because we lived in a place where a lot of other Japanese families lived...I tried to avoid its exclusivity as far as possible. Most of the Japanese employees and their families played golf during the week or at the weekend...but I wanted to do something different from what those other company-wives did...
>
> (Mrs. K2, PI10)

Similarly, Mrs. K3 (MI14) did not attempt to associate with other Japanese families as she was aware of some internal constraints in the Japanese community. Instead she tried to help with volunteer work through the local church and got on better terms with some local families. Mrs. S1 (PI9), who had a long sojourn experience in the U.S.A., also made similar remarks. The fact that Japanese

companies provided accommodation on site, locating the families in close proximity, meant that, although they had not deliberately done so, the expatriates ended up living in a Japanese community. Even though they had good intentions of improving their spoken language ability or interacting with local people, the chances were limited. In the end, many of them had given up. Some wives described how it was difficult for the Japanese overseas families to penetrate the cultural barriers and venture into the foreign environment as they were comfortably settled into their Japanese circles. Relatively short periods of stay and the expectation of returning home soon might have been additional reasons for discouraging anything more than only superficial involvement in the culture of the host country.

Therefore, it was reasonable to expect that those wives who were evaluated as having low participation in the foreign culture would report that they had associated much more with other Japanese families in the Japanese communities. The wives' degree of involvement in the Japanese community was assessed by examining the interview data in terms of which activities (organised by Japanese circles/networks) they were involved in, how frequently they participated in these activities, how many close Japanese friends they had acquired during the sojourn and whether they had sent their children to an overseas Japanese school. Table 4.3.5 shows the relationship between the degree of integration into the host community and the degree of involvement in the Japanese community. As expected, the results from Table 4.3.5 confirm that there is a tendency that the more they participated in local activities and the more frequent their interaction with host country nationals, the less they were involved with the Japanese circles.

Table 4.3.5 The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Local Community and the Degree of Involvement in the Japanese Community (1)

Involvement in the local community / Involvement in the Japanese community	Low	Medium	High	total
Low	1	0	9	10
Medium	1	7	3	11
High	7	5	2	14
total	9	12	14	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.0003*** (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.0009***

Table 4.3.5A The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Local Community and Degree of Involvement in the Japanese Community (2)

Involvement in the local community / Involvement in the Japanese community	Low/Medium	High	total
Low/Medium	2	12	14
High	7	2	9
total	9	14	23

Fisher's exact test: p= 0.007** (two-tailed) (*df*= 1, N= 23)

Further examination of Table 4.3.5 to compare the difference between the 'High involvement in local community group' and the 'Low/Medium involvement in the Japanese community group' in their participation in the local community (Table 4.3.5A) also indicates that the difference is significant in that those wives involved in the local community to a greater degree were less likely to be involved in the Japanese community.

Stori (2001) suggested that the amount of interaction with the home culture during the overseas sojourn was one of the variables affecting re-entry. Sojourners who stayed within an expatriate community had more communication and were in closer contact with their home country. It is likely that the more familiar the returnee is with changes in the home culture, the easier will be the re-entry. Thus,

it was expected that those wives who had stayed outside the Japanese circles/networks would be more likely to experience re-entry shock. On the other hand, it is reasonable to expect that those wives who were absorbed in the expatriate community would be less likely to have re-entry difficulties as they had remained in a more familiar environment, i.e., one similar to their home culture. Table 4.3.6 shows how the degree of involvement in the Japanese community affected their readjustment back home.

Table 4.3.6 The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Japanese Community and Readjustment Problems (1)

Readjustment problems / Involvement in the Japanese community	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Low	0	4	6	10
Medimum	1	9	1	11
High	2	11	1	14
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.021* (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.004**

Table 4.3.6A The Relationship between the Degree of Involvement in the Japanese Community and Readjustment Problems (2)

Readjustment problems / Involvment in the Japanese community	Minor Readjustment Problems	Severe Readjustment Problems	total
Low	4	6	10
High	11	1	12
total	15	7	22

Fisher's exact test: p= 0.020* (two-tailed) (*df*= 1, N= 22)

As can be seen in Table 4.3.6, six wives out of eight who experienced a difficult transition had been involved in the Japanese communities to a lesser degree and only one of these wives had been involved to a higher degree. This suggests a strong relationship between the degree of involvement in the Japanese

communities and the subsequent readjustment difficulties. When the analysis is repeated, particularly for the comparison between the 'High involvement group' and the 'Low involvement group' (Table 4.3.6A), the result also confirms that those who had participated less in the Japanese community were more likely to have experienced a difficult transition back home. This may be partly interpreted in terms of the patterns of social interaction in the host culture. As was shown in Table 4.3.5 and Table 4.3.5A, those wives who had participated actively in local community activities, which they found stimulating and satisfying, were less likely to stay within the Japanese circles. Back home, they may have missed the friendships developed through those activities and the satisfaction of performing community service or the excitement of learning new hobbies. Such pursuits may be less available back home, and they often require a more conscious effort. Consequently, these wives may experience greater feelings of emptiness after re-entry.

However, there was one wife, Mrs. T5 (MI25), who admitted that she had blended into the 'little Tokyo' and enjoyed a close-knit network of Japanese friends during her sojourn, but reported psychological depression after her re-entry. She said she missed the closeness of the expatriate community and friends with whom she shared the status of being a company-wife. She got used to coming together on a regular basis. However, after returning home, people around her seemed to lead more independent lives and were not thrown together so much. Her depression might have been linked to her involvement in the Japanese community and the loss of the closeness of human relationships in the expatriate community.

Overall, an involvement in the Japanese community can have both positive and negative effects on the individual's psychological well-being during the cross-cultural adaptation, but this is not necessarily true for the readaptation period. In this study, the wives who were involved less in the Japanese community tended to experience a more difficult repatriation.

Local language ability

Some previous studies (e.g., Church, 1982; Kim, 1978) have reported that the relationship between language fluency and social interaction is likely to be a reciprocal one. This means that the greater one's level of language competence, the greater one will participate in community activities in the foreign country. Although all of the respondents returning from English-speaking countries spoke some English, many of them mentioned their language problems. The level of confidence in the local language was measured by a self-assessment by the returnee wives of their speaking, writing, reading and listening comprehension abilities. In this study, it was found that six wives were fluent, another twenty-six wives were fairly good or good enough to cope with daily necessities (able to make themselves understood; intermediate) and three wives had minimal ability (poor or having some difficulty). Only one of the twenty-seven respondents who had returned from English-speaking countries rated her ability to read, speak and understand English as 'poor'. The rest of the wives rated their English ability as at least enough to cope with everyday needs.

The wives tended to try hard to study the local language during their initial period of residence, but most gave up formal study after about two years. They expressed

frustration that, despite their efforts, they seemed to be unable to make sufficient progress in the language to carry on more than superficial conversations with their neighbours and local friends. Amongst those wives who stayed in non-English speaking countries, Mrs. T2 (MI13) stated:

> This was my first experience of learning German. At first, I took lessons organised by the Germany-Japan cultural exchange society, which were exclusively arranged for Japanese company-wives...Within a year or two, as you get used to local life, you're able to learn basic conversations which are necessary for daily interaction, like greetings and what to say when you buy things...But after that I gave up because I could manage to do most of the things I needed to do...
>
> (Mrs. T2, MI 13)

Most of the wives interviewed appeared to have been managing well in communicating in local languages. However, there was a distinct concentration of comments regarding difficulties abroad with languages. They voiced some quite strong emotional statements concerning language. Even amongst those who seemed to have adjusted well in the foreign environment, there was a strong feeling that their language difficulty kept them from developing truly intimate relationships with local people. Several wives commented on their local language ability as follows:

> I think my biggest problem was the language, I just couldn't express myself properly...I wasn't able to say what I wanted to say. I experienced a lot of

awkward situations because of that...

(Mrs. K3, MI14)

When I lost confidence in speaking and understanding English, I began to think that I was not able to express myself both in English and Japanese. I sank into a depression. When you talk to people, you're supposed to look at the other person's eyes. I just couldn't do that at that time. I was so nervous...it was the most difficult experience. I think that was because I lost confidence in myself. I was afraid of meeting people and talking to them. It went on like that for about a year.

(Mrs. O2, MI23)

Though there was a strong feeling that however enthusiastic they were in learning the local language, they came to realise that it was difficult to develop activities that truly crossed the cultural line. They were firmly of the opinion that mixing with local people had a lot to do with language ability. This is particularly true for a wife whose husband was given an assignment in France. Mrs. N2 (PI3) said:

First, I could not speak French very well, and they didn't understand what I said. I seldom really talked with local people for the first year or two in France...if you're trying to translate in your head from your own language to a foreign language obviously the grammatical structures don't work...and I think that's where some of the problem lies...it's not merely the accent.

(Mrs. N2, PI3)

Mrs. K2 (PI10) reported the importance of fluency in the local language by saying:

> I think it (fluency in English) gave me some idea of the way American people talk or how they think about certain things, which I think was very useful for me when I actually lived among them...
>
> (Mrs. K2, PI10)

The importance of fluency was often emphasised. But once a certain level of language competence is gained, other social traits and skills possessed by an individual will lead to a greater participation in activities in the foreign country. This can in turn lead the individual to improved command of the local language. The acquisition of culturally appropriate skills and behaviours through contact with hosts are important as well. This is reflected in Mrs. O1's (PI8) remark, who was herself a returnee child:

> I know it's important to be able to speak English, to some extent, as it's a necessity to survive and cope with daily needs in the foreign environment. But I think the ability to speak the local language is very different from the ability to live and fit in well in the local community. People think that if you are fluent, you'll have no problem at all, they just assume that you'll know everything about the country, which is actually not true...
>
> (Mrs. O1, PI8)

Table 4.3.7 shows the relationship between the level of local language ability of returnee wives and the degree of involvement in the host communities. As

Table 4.3.7 The Relationship between the Levels of Local Language Fluency and the Degree of Involvement in the Local Community

Involvement in the local community / Local lanaguage fluency	low	Medium	High	total
Poor	3	0	0	3
Enough to cope with	7	9	4	20
Fairly good	0	5	1	6
Fluent	0	0	6	6
total	10	14	11	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.0001*** (*df*= 6, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.0002***

expected and as can be seen in the table, the interview data from this study indicates a reciprocal influence, i.e., the local language proficiency tends to relate to the participation in the host culture, and vice versa. This finding is consistent with the results from the previous studies concerning cross-cultural transitions and adaptations. The effect is evident in that the more fluent the wife was in the local language, the more they had contact with local people and were involved in the local activities.

Table 4.3.8 compares the local language ability to the readjustment problems experienced. The effects of local language fluency were not evident in that the wives who were more fluent in the local language, did not show that they had experienced more difficulty upon re-entry.

As can been seen in Table 4.3.8, there seems to be no clear pattern in terms of the level of local language fluency and the readjustment difficulties. This may be due to the fact that most of the respondents (n=32) reported their local language ability as at least 'enough to cope with', 'fairly good', or 'fluent'. Those wives who had a

Table 4.3.8 The Relationship between the Levels of Local Language Fluency and Readjustment Problems

Readjustment problems / Local lanaguage fluency	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Poor	0	2	1	3
Enough to cope with	2	14	4	20
Fairly good	0	4	2	6
Fluent	1	4	1	6
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.929(NS) (df= 6, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.680(NS)

certain degree of local language proficiency had some advantages in overseas adjustment although this was not the case when they made their re-entry transitions.

Overall integration into the host community

The respondents' overall level of integration into the host community was assessed by asking the returnee wives to rate themselves in how well they had adjusted or integrated into the host community. Only five wives out of thirty-five considered that they had difficulties in integrating in the local communities. Nearly half reported that they had integrated reasonably well and thirteen wives rated themselves as well integrated into the foreign culture (Table 4.3.9).

Table 4.3.9 Overall Integration to the Host Culture (Self-assessed)

Not well integrated	5
Reasonably well integrated	17
Well integrated	13
total	35

Wives who evaluated themselves as less well integrated in the foreign culture reported that they tended to associate much more with other Japanese wives, either wives of other employees at their husbands' company or wives at their hobby circles or families with children in the same supplementary Japanese schools, i.e., those who were less integrated in the host communities were more likely to be involved in the Japanese communities (Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: fe [df = 4, N = 35] = 18.916, p< 0.001***). For those who reported poor integration in the foreign country (n=5), the difficulties were in becoming accustomed to the daily routines of overseas life, language problems, associating with local mothers/wives, different social expectations, lifestyles and customs, homesickness and problems with children's adjustment at local schools.

Bochner (1973) found the important and interesting fact that a person who is most successful at adjusting to a new culture is often the worst at readjusting to his old culture. Sussman (2000, 2001) hypothesised that there is an association between overseas adaptation and the repatriation experience (although the direction of the relationship is a consequence of the cultural identity strength on the part of the sojourner). It was predicted that the degree to which a wife absorbs the foreign culture affects the degree of difficulty in readjusting to her old culture. The explanation is probably that a person who has adjusted well to a foreign culture is one who can accept new ideas, who can meet and talk with people who have different backgrounds, and who can be happy with the stimulation that she finds every day. This same person may readjust poorly when she goes home since her new ideas conflict with tradition. She can find no internationally minded people, and she finds negative aspects of the home culture, which she had not noticed

before her departure.

In this study for example, Mrs. K3 (MI14), Mrs. O2 (MI23), Mrs. S4 (MI30) and Mrs. T7 (MI34) who actively participated in the local community activities during their sojourn and seemed to have adjusted well in the foreign environment, had experienced severe re-entry problems. On the other hand, Mrs. K4 (MI22) and Mrs. S3 (MI20), who had not absorbed the host cultures, made smooth transitions upon re-entry. They are typical cases of those who never really penetrated the foreign environment and experienced little re-entry shock. These particular cases seem to be compatible with previous studies that suggested that the degree to which an individual absorbs the foreign culture affects the amount of readjustment difficulty in the home culture.

The primary hypothesis to be tested in this section intended to examine the degree to which the overall integration into the foreign culture had an impact on the returnee wives' overall readjustment levels. Table 4.3.10 shows the relationship between self-reported levels of integration into the foreign culture and readjustment difficulties. The result of the further analysis of the table by comparing those who perceived themselves as 'reasonably well integrated' and those who perceived themselves as 'well integrated' in the host culture (Table 4.3.10A) also approached statistical significance, suggesting that the difference in terms of readjustment difficulties was related to the levels of integration. The wives who perceived themselves as well integrated in the foreign culture were more likely to have experienced difficult transitions after returning home. The theory that the more successful a person is at adapting to a foreign culture, the

Table 4.3.10 The Relationship between the Perceived Levels of Integration into the Host Culture and Readjustment Problems (1)

Readjustment problems / Levles of integration	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Not well integrated	2	2	1	5
Reasonably well integrate	0	15	2	17
Well integrated	1	7	5	13
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.022* (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.061

Table 4.3.10A The Relationship between the Perceived Levels of Integration into the Host Culture and Readjustment Problems (2)

Readjustment Problems / Perceived levels of Integration	Minor Readjustment Problems	Severe Readjustment Problems	total
Reasonably well integrated	15	2	17
Well integrated	7	5	12
total	22	7	29

Fisher's exact test: p= 0.092 (two-tailed) (*df*= 1, N= 29)

harder it will be to readjust to the home country (Bochner, 1973; Sussman, 2000, 2001) seemed to be partly supported by the present interview results.

4.3.2 Time factors

1) Time spent abroad

The length of stay overseas during the foreign assignment seems to be a critical factor in the overall repatriation adjustment. It can be assumed that longer absence from the home culture makes it more difficult to readjust (Lysgaard, 1955). Previous researches (e.g., Stori, 2001; Martin, 1984; Bennett et al., 1958) have suggested that the number of years returnees spent in foreign countries is positively correlated with their re-entry difficulties. It is reasonable to think that

the longer that individuals are away from their home country, the more both they and their native environments will change and therefore the more uncertainty individuals would encounter upon their return.

In this study, the range of total length of time spent overseas for the first overseas assignment was from one and a half years to fourteen years with an average length of 4.66 years (*sd* = 2.83). Table 4.3.11 shows how the length of stay overseas affected their readjustment back home. The wives were divided into two groups in each test according to the time they had spent abroad: those who had stayed for two years and those who had stayed for more than two years (for their first assignments). Also those who had stayed three years or more, those who had stayed four years or more, etc. The distribution in Table 4.3.11 indicates that the time spent abroad has a slight effect on the returnee wives' readjustment. More of the returnee wives who spent three/four years and less tend to have experienced difficult readjustment. All the wives who reported a difficult re-entry had been on their overseas assignment for less than six years. Therefore the effect of longer overseas stay was not significant among the returnee wives in this study. Mrs. H. (MI15), for example, although she had stayed in the U.K. for more than eight years, only indicated minor readjustment problems. She spent a considerable time abroad however, she made a relatively smooth transition, again probably because of her positive frame of mind in approaching her re-entry.

As can be seen in Table 4.3.11, the group differences in terms of other combinations of time spent abroad (two, five, six, seven years) did not reach statistical significance. The previous finding that the longer the sojourners stayed

Table 4.3.11 Comparison of the Readjustment Problems by Time Spent Abroad

Readjustment problems / Time spent abroad	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
2 years and less	1	3	3	7
More than 2 years	2	21	5	28
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.258(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.346(NS)				
3 years and less	2	5	5	12
More than 3 years	1	19	3	23
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.042* (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.339				
4 years and less	2	10	7	19
More than 4 years	1	14	1	16
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.045* (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.137				
5 years and less	2	11	7	20
More than 5 years	1	13	1	15
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.101(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.137				
6 years and less	2	18	8	28
More than 6 years	1	6	0	7
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.101(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.116				
7 years and less	2	22	8	32
More than 7 years	1	2	0	3
total	3	24	8	35
Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.353(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 35) Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.249(NS)				

abroad, the more they would experience difficulties upon their re-entry seems to be unsubstantiated in this study.

2) Multiple periods of time spent abroad

Previous overseas experiences and re-entry experiences will give a positive effect in that returnees can develop social skills for penetrating social groups in new

neighbourhoods. It is expected that those who had not previously experienced a major geographic move, or more precisely a "psychological relocation," seemed particularly likely to feel lost upon their return to the original environment (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). This result is expected because those who had previous overseas living experience had more realistic expectations on re-entry. The returning sojourner who had re-entered his/her home culture previously would at least anticipate some difficulties and problems (Martin, 1984).

In this study, there were eight returnee wives out of thirty-five who had re-entry experiences at least two times. Table 4.3.12 describes those eight 'repeaters" re-entry situations. Among those who had previous re-entry experience, five wives showed the similar trend of seeing oneself as coping a little better in the present than one had in the past. When focusing more closely on the nature of the previous re-entry experience, it was found that for those wives returned from the same countries, such as Mrs. M1 (MI19), Mrs. T3 (MI18) from the U.S.A., and Mrs. K4 (MI22) from Germany, previous re-entry experience was a significant help in readjusting to home culture.

Therefore it was expected that there might have been possible differences in readjustment level between those returnee wives who have lived in several overseas locales or experienced multiple re-entries and those who are the 'first timers', i.e., those returning company-wives who have stayed abroad and reentered Japan previously would be likely to have less difficulties and problems such as anxiety, depression and mental complaints in readjusting to the home culture as they would at least anticipate some difficulties. It is reasonable to

Table 4.3.12 Returnee Wives with Multiple Re-entry Experiences

Respondents	Re-entry	Country stayed	No. of years stayed	No. of years back in Japan (since the most recent assignment)	Readjustment problems
Mrs. N2 (PI3)	1	France	5		Severe
	2	Madagascar	3		Minor
	3	France	2	1	Minor
Mrs. Y (MI16)	1	U.S.A	2		Minor
	2	Singapore	5	3	Minor
Mrs. F2 (MI17)	1	U.S.A	1.5		Severe
	2	Malaysia	3	2	Severe
Mrs. T3 (MI18)	1	U.S.A	2		Minor
	2	U.S.A	8	2	Minor
Mrs. M1 (MI19)	1	U.S.A	4		Minor
	2	U.S.A	5	3	Minor
Mrs. K4 (MI22)	1	Germany	2		No
	2	Germany	4	1	No
Mrs. O2 (MI23)	1	U.S.A	1.5		Severe
	2	U.S.A	5		Severe
	3	U.S.A	4	3	Severe
Mrs. M2 (MI33)	1	Germany	6		Minor
	2	England	4	1.5	Minor

assume that previous experience in moving between cultures or prior exposure to the different cultures would lead to ease in adjustment to different environment of any sorts, whether host or home cultures.

Therefore it was expected that there might have been possible differences in the readjustment levels between those returnee wives who had lived in several overseas locales or experienced multiple re-entries and those who were 'first timers'. Those returning company-wives who had stayed abroad and re-entered Japan previously were likely to have fewer difficulties and problems, such as anxiety, depression and mental complaints, in readjusting to the home culture, because they could at least anticipate some difficulties. It is reasonable to assume

that previous experience in moving between cultures or prior exposure to different cultures would lead to an easier adjustment to different environments of any sort, including host and home cultures.

Table 4.3.13 shows a comparison between those who had stayed abroad only once (the first timers) and those who had stayed abroad more than once (the repeaters).

Table 4.3.13 Comparison of the Readjustment Problems by Previous Assignment

Readjustment problems / Assignment	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Repeaters	1	5	2	8
First Timers	2	20	5	27
total	3	25	7	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.806(NS) (df= 2, N= 35)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.857(NS)

Despite the theoretical appeal, the differences between those who had multiple overseas experiences and the 'first-timers' repatriation process did not seem significant in this study, suggesting there might be a more important factor in repatriation adjustment. As Klineberg and Hull (1979) found, previous experiences might have more effect on social and environmental adjustment than on psychological adjustment. Another possible explanation might be that there could be a mixture of positive and negative previous repatriation experiences. If positive previous repatriation experiences facilitate the second readjustment, then it is possible that negative experiences confound the expected relationship. In fact, other than the three wives who reported that their most recent re-entry was easier than the previous one, the rest of the repeaters (n=5) stated that they actually felt even more depressed during their second or third repatriation period.

3) Number of years which have elapsed since return

Since eight of the thirty-five wives had multiple experiences of staying abroad, it was difficult to assess how the length of time since returning to Japan had affected their readjustment process. Thus, in this section, the analysis focused only on the respondents who had not had multiple re-entry experiences (i.e., those who had returned from their first overseas assignment at the time of the interviews).

Table 4.3.14 compares the differences in the readjustment problems among the 'first timers' (N=27) by the number of years which had elapsed since their return to Japan.

Table 4.3.14 Comparison of the Readjustment Problems by Number of Years Elapsed since Returning to Japan

Readjustment problems / Number of years elapsed since returning	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Less than 2 years	0	7	1	8
2 and more years	2	13	4	19
total	2	20	5	27

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.511(NS) (*df*= 2, N= 27)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 1(NS)

Several studies (e.g., Harvey, 1982; Alder, 1981; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963) have argued that after an international assignment, individuals gradually readjust to their home country over a period of time following the 'honeymoon stage' (Black & Gregersen, 1991:676). Therefore it would be expected that the longer the elapsed time since returning to Japan, the more information the individual would have acquired and the more familiar he/she will have become with previous behaviour patterns. This will lead to a greater repatriation adjustment. In addition, longer time back could mean forgetting earlier difficulties.

The length of time back in Japan should therefore be positively related to overall readjustment for the returnee wives. However, as shown in Table 4.3.14, the number of years which had elapsed since returning to Japan did not significantly predict general repatriation adjustment. It should be noted that this study did not measure the respondents' current adjustment. The analysis here was based on their overall adjustment, in which case, the respondents might have discussed their most difficult time, which could have been in the first few months. The difficult patch would continue as part of one's history even if she subsequently fully re-integrated. And again, a restricted range problem may have influenced the result because the average time back in Japan among the 'first timers' was 2.81 years and there was little variance (the range was from 0.5 to 4.5 years with sd=1.12).

4.3.3 Attitudinal variables

Attitudinal variables, in the present research, comprise those which are related to the returnee wives' attitudes, perceptions, thoughts and feelings laying behind the semi-structured pattern of questions. The transcribed interview data was content-analysed, located and coded according to a predetermined framework in order to address the research questions as stated in the previous chapter. The areas were categorised as follows:

1) Willingness to move abroad

2) Levels of desire to return home

3) Attitude to overseas experience

4) Value change as a result of living abroad

5) Thoughts about being a company-wife

6) Perceptions about Japan

Again, the wives' first overseas assignments and returning experiences were the main focus of the analysis in this section unless otherwise indicated.

1) Willingness to move abroad

First emotional reactions

As shown in Table 4.3.15, only ten of the thirty-five wives interviewed reacted negatively when they heard about their husbands' international transfers. "Worried, concerned, anxious" were the most common negative emotional reactions amongst these wives.

On the other hand, nearly half of the wives (n=15) reacted positively to their husbands' overseas transfers, five of them considered it as "a positive change" and six felt excited or very excited. Other wives had "realistic" expectations and said they accepted it as a normal part of their husbands' careers or said they "had no choice but to accompany him".

For nearly three quarters (n=25) of the returnee wives interviewed, leaving Japan did not appear to be a significant stress. They thought that leaving Japan was not a particularly difficult hurdle and tended to be open to new experiences. For instance:

Table 4.3.15 The First Emotional Reactions

First emotional reactions	Frequency
Negative reactions	
not at all excited	1
rejected	1
rather reluctant	1
didn't want to go	3
worried, concerned, anxious	3
nervous	1
total	10
Realistic (Neutral)	
a mixed feeling, half excited and half worried	1
realistic, low expectations	6
accepted, no choice	1
surprised	2
total	10
Positive reactions	
perceived it as a positive change	5
excited	3
very excited	3
relaxed	1
felt relieved to get away from Japan	1
looking forward to, willing to go	1
didn't mind going	1
total	15
total	35

> Basically I wanted to go to the States and live there, I didn't object to accompanying him. I made up my mind to go with him and thought it would be a positive change in my life.
>
> (Mrs. F3, MI24)

Several respondents reported that it was easier to travel whilst their children were young but it becomes more difficult as they grow older because of their schooling. Many of those who had negative reactions mentioned concerns about their children's education. However, some wives saw the same experience as a positive change for their children:

I didn't worry about bringing up my children overseas as they were still very young and so I had no need to worry about their education. We accepted the overseas assignment because we thought it might be restful in some way...we assumed that it would be soothing to get away from the hustle and bustle of the Japanese way of life...

(Mrs. O1, PI8)

I was very excited about living in the U.S. In a way I felt relieved because they (children) were able to stay away from the 'examination hell' in our education-conscious society.

(Mrs. O2, MI23)

These wives were prepared to uproot their families from their ways of life, to leave their friends and established routines to go somewhere new where they would not know anyone. They might have been undecided at first but then they thought it would be good, in Isa's (1996) term, 'to broaden their horizons'. Those who had been excited by the move abroad or tried to make it a positive change for themselves were likely to see the transfer as an opportunity for growth.

However, for the wives who were not willing to leave, the most common reaction was a feeling of anxiety, which was expressed in words such as "worried", "concerned", "anxious" and "nervous". In these cases, the international move itself created new stresses and interpersonal difficulties, which had not previously existed. Mrs. K1 (PI7), whose husband received his assignment in Djakarta, Indonesia, put it this way:

I just thought "why now?" since our daughter was just over one and a half years old, and also I was pregnant...at that time. About a year before, my husband had received a domestic assignment away from Tokyo and we had moved to that place and were just beginning to settle in, to get used to the local life there. I was just worried. There were so many things unknown about Indonesia...But I had no say.

(Mrs. K1, PI7)

This was not the only case but also applied to several other wives. Mrs. T4 (MI21) expressed her anxiety before her departure as follows:

I was not at all excited about living in England. I wanted to stay in Tokyo and didn't want to lose my established life here. I was so worried about raising my children in a foreign country and felt overwhelmed by the anxiety of starting a totally different life in an unfamiliar environment...I tend to think too much, I mean, in a negative way and to worry about things too much before they actually happen...and as I heard more and more people around me saying they envied me, I got more and more depressed...

(Mrs. T4, MI21)

Several wives reported their concern about their local language ability. It was typically commented in the following way:

I was rather reluctant as I was worried about my English language ability and the things relating to my child. It was not as if I would not agree to go, but I just

felt insecure...

(Mrs. O3, MI26)

Mrs. K4 (MI22) is one of those who had a strong and positive attachment to her home and community. She had strong interpersonal relationships and ties and her identity was based on the availability of and contact with familiar groups of people. She felt isolated and extremely lonely in her new home in Germany. Her homesickness during the sojourn in Germany manifested itself in feelings of loss, continued longing, helplessness, depression and a tendency to idealise her home country. Whilst an international assignment creates new opportunities for some wives, for others it leads to intense personal suffering which is not easily alleviated. She spoke about how she felt on leaving:

> I didn't want to live abroad at all. It didn't matter where it was. I used to think that I wouldn't get married to somebody who'd go abroad for his work. My husband knew it and before we were married he said that he wouldn't be asked to go on an overseas assignment. But one day, the request suddenly came... When I first heard of it we hadn't got married yet and it made me think about not marrying him solely because of the overseas assignment.
>
> (Mrs. K4, MI22)

A geographic change necessitates an adaptation to a new culture and language, new friends, new neighbourhoods and new social and recreational activities. Without the support of relatives or close friends, Mrs K4 felt as if she had been thrust into a social vacuum. This pattern of depression occurred even though the

moves were related to presumably desirable circumstances, such as improved housing and financial status. Several wives considered the leave as something which forced them to relinquish ties with relatives and friends and give up the many socio-cultural supports present in Japan. Thus, the act of leaving may involve issues of separation, repudiation and loss that often have significant implications for later re-adaptation.

Other wives expressed their mixed feelings when they heard about their husbands' overseas transfers. They tended to agree that an overseas assignment was a normal part of career progression for their husbands and accepted it with realistic expectations:

> I was quite calm about it, saying, 'well if you want it, I don't mind going, but it's up to you...' I let my husband make the decision and I didn't influence him. I just told him that whatever he wanted to do, and obviously if he wanted the job that was entirely up to him.
>
> (Mrs. N2, PI3)

> I just thought the time had come...It was alright as long as it was in America as I didn't have to worry so much about the language...
>
> (Mrs. U2, MI31)

> As the trip had been expected, I was sort of ready to accompany my husband.
>
> (Mrs. M2, MI33)

The most pervasive attitude amongst these 'neutral wives' was a general feeling that their husbands' careers must come first; that even the smallest demands of their husbands' work take precedence over any aspect of their own careers, personal or social lives (See Chapter 5, section 5.5).

The relationship between willingness to move abroad and adjustment in a foreign country

At first glance events occurring around the point of leaving may influence the initial adjustment in a host culture. Klineberg and Hull (1979) pointed out that predeparture experiences, levels of competence and degree of preparation will affect what happens to the person while abroad. It is assumed that the sojourner's prior expectations and willingness to move to a foreign culture will affect the way he or she perceives the foreign country and the amount of adjustment difficulty to the host society, especially during the initial settling in period. In one of the few studies on expectations, Weissman and Furnham (1987) compared the expectations of Americans prior to their move to Great Britain with their actual experiences after relocation. Their results showed that the subjects were accurate in their expectations with less than 10 percent of the subjects reporting significant differences between expectations and actual experiences.

However, Table 4.3.16 does not clearly verify this tendency, i.e., those wives who had positively accepted their overseas assignment were only slightly more likely to have adjusted well in the foreign environment. Thus, in the present study, the nature of the prior expectations was not considered very likely to facilitate overseas adjustment. It can be seen in Table 4.3.16 that the lower levels of

Table 4.3.16 The Relationship between Willingness to Move and Adjustment to a Foreign Country

Overall adjustment to the foreign culture / First emotional reactions	Not well adjusted	Reasonably well adjusted	Well adjusted	total
Negative	2	5	3	10
Realistic	2	5	3	10
Positive	1	7	7	15
total	5	17	13	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.786(NS) (df= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.497(NS)

willingness to move abroad did not coincide with the subjective feelings of poor adaptation and dissatisfaction in their overseas experience. This may be because of the fact that most of the informants in the 'Negative reaction group' (n=10) evaluated themselves as reasonably well adjusted or well adjusted in the foreign environment in general.

For example, Mrs. O3 (MI26) was very worried about her English language ability and various things relating to raising her child in an unfamiliar environment before her departure. However, one year later, working with the local mothers at her daughter's school and having greater social exposure, she had started participating in the local life in the U.S.A. The volunteer activities in which she was engaged obviously made her overseas life more active and enjoyable and she became less worried and more positive. As a sojourner adjusts to the foreign environment, he or she feels more satisfaction than strain (Brislin, 1981). Her case demonstrates the wives' enhanced self-confidence as a result of living abroad after one year, which will be discussed in the later section 4.3.3-4).

<u>The relationship between willingness to move abroad and overall readjustment</u>

As can be seen in Table 4.3.17, no clear pattern between the sojourner's first reaction on leaving Japan and the degree of readjustment difficulty is suggested. The wives' willingness to move abroad or the favourability of their pre-departure opinions have no direct effects on their re-entry adjustment. Comparing the interview data of the 'Negative', the 'Realistic' and the 'Positive' reaction groups of informants, overall readjustment levels according to frequency counts and ratio were not very different among the three groups.

Table 4.3.17 The Relationship between Willingness to Move and Readjustment Problems

Readjustment problems / First emotional reactions	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Negative	1	8	1	10
Realistic	0	7	3	10
Positive	2	9	4	15
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher–Freeman–Halton test: p= 0.614(NS) (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal–Wallis test: p= 0.492(NS)

The general impression gained from the interviews is that those wives who had more realistic expectations of moving abroad, had only experienced relatively minor readjustment problems, e.g., more tangible problems such as the reduction in the quality of the physical environment, including poorer housing conditions and public facilities. According to Hill (1958) and McCubbin et al. (1976), whether an individual feels stress or not is the individual's perception of an event as stressful. This may account for the variation in reported difficulties experienced during the transitional periods. The results shown in Table 4.3.17 may be due to the fact that a certain personality characteristic, probably a tendency to think rationally and realistically, may play a role and serve to reduce stress and

undesirable emotional reactions during the transitional process. For those wives who rationalised the international transfer and perceived it as a necessary course, international moves were not seen as stresses.

2) Level of desire to return home

Answers to the question "How did you feel about going home?" were classified into three categories by content-analysis to determine if each answer conveyed the respondent's positive (eager to return), negative (wanted to remain) or moderate (moderate desire to return) feelings about returning to Japan (Table 4.3.18). As the results in Table 4.3.18 show, the overwhelming majority of the respondents were keen to remain and only a few explicitly said that they were keen to return home.

Table 4.3.18 Level of Desire to Return Home

	Frequency
Eager to return	
– felt relieved as had always wanted to return	1
– felt relieved as set free from strains	1
– was quite relieved as worried about children's education	1
total	3
Moderate desire to return	
wanted to remain if possible but it was the right time…	
– because of pregrancy	2
– in terms of children's schooling	6
– as anticipated that it would be more difficult if staying longer	1
– as had had enough experiences	4
total	13
Wanted to remain	
– wanted to remain a bit longer (1 more year)	3
– wanted to remain longer (2–3 more years)	11
– wanted to remain as long as possible	4
– wanted to remain permanently	1
total	19
total	35

It is reasonable to expect company-wives to be changed by a material increase in their standard of living, as well as by the new opportunities and added freedom of the sojourn. There were many wives who did not want to return home. But more often than not material comforts, and especially changes in the levels of aspiration and self-image (i.e., changed values, which will be discussed later in this chapter) were cited as reasons for wishing to remain.

On the other hand, there were several wives who looked forward to returning home. Mrs. K4 (MI22) admitted that she felt more relaxed in her second assignment, as she had been suffering from homesickness and had been keen to go home throughout her first stay in Germany. She reported that she had gone through a period of loneliness characterised by a feeling of isolation and a keen sense of the loss of friends and family in Japan. It was not surprising that she was relieved to be returning to Japan after having finished their first assignment, and again, after the second assignment.

Most of the respondents in the 'Moderate desire to return' group expressed mixed feelings about going home. They stated that they would have liked to remain if they did not have to worry about their children's education. The most frequently mentioned reason was that it was the right time for their children to go home and readjust to the Japanese school systems. A typical comment was:

> When I heard that my husband's assignment in the U.S.A. was over and we would have to go back to Japan, I thought the time was right and I was sort of ready, although I wanted to stay there a bit longer. My older son was just about

to start at middle school so we had to go back at that time. If we'd stayed longer, it would have been more difficult for him to catch up and reintegrate into the Japanese schooling system.

(Mrs. T5, MI25)

The relationship between level of desire to return home and overall readjustment

Adler (1976, 1981) assumed that those who had only a moderate desire to return home would have the most successful re-entry, whereas returnees who had a strong desire to remain abroad would experience the greatest difficulties in the transitional process. She also speculated that those who had a strong desire to go home would experience an unsuccessful re-entry as these returnees overemphasise the positive and disregard the negative aspects of the home country. Table 4.3.19 and Table 4.3.19A present the relationship between the wives' levels of desire to return home and their overall readjustment problems. They show a tendency that those wives who were eager to go home would be more likely to have no problems or minor readjustment problems and that those who had a desire to remain abroad would experience more difficult re-entry transitions. But those who had a moderate desire to go home did not necessarily experience successful re-entry. The results found support for the second part of Adler's (1976, 1981) assertion that a desire to remain abroad made readjustment harder, but not the first, i.e., having moderate desire to return home made it easier.

For example, Mrs. N2 (PI3) spent a total of seven years in France and three years in Madagascar and experienced a difficult transition immediately after her re-entry. Her comment was classified as 'Moderate level of desire to return' as she

Table 4.3.19 The Relationship between Level of Desire to Return Home and Readjustment Problems (1)

Readjustment problems / Level of desire to return	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Was eager to go home	2	1	0	3
Moderate desire to return	1	10	2	13
Wanted to remain	0	13	6	19
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.005** (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.019*

Table 4.3.19A The Relationship between Level of Desire to Return Home and Readjustment Problems (2)

Readjustment problems / Level of desire to return	No Readjsutment Problems	Minor Readjustment Problems	total
Was eager to go home	2	1	14
Wanted to remain	0	13	9
total	2	14	23

Fisher's exact test: p= 0.025* (two-tailed) (*df*= 1, N= 23)

expressed her mixed feelings towards re-entry and her life back in Japan:

> Coming home was exciting and I looked forward to it, but I also missed a lot of things about France. I felt a bit let-down, making such a transition from a challenging environment back to one containing few surprises.
>
> (Mrs.N2, PI3)

More than half of the wives interviewed (n=19) stated that they wanted to remain abroad. However, the degree of desire to remain varied from 'wanted to stay a bit longer (one year)' to 'wanted to stay permanently'. Overall, there was a tendency that those wives who were eager to remain in the foreign country were likely to experience more difficult re-entry transitions. For example, Mrs. K3 (MI14) returned unwillingly to Japan and suffered from a mild depression after her

re-entry. She expressed much dissatisfaction with life in Japan and she reported that she still feels the same way although it has been more than two years since she returned:

> I wish I could have stayed longer in the U.S. I don't know if we could have actually stayed longer but at one time I wanted to reside there permanently. When I returned I felt that I had lost everything that I had...I was going through a depression...I thought that I would come back to a familiar place but in reality, it was no longer there. I just felt I had lost both of the lives at the same time.
>
> (Mrs. K3, MI14)

A similar experience was felt by another returnee wife. Mrs. K5 (MI27) reported that she really enjoyed her life in Germany and wanted to stay there at least another three to four years. She described some of the underlying feelings after her re-entry:

> I think I had learned how to adapt myself to a new environment, but what I had overlooked was how to readjust when I returned to Japan...After everything had been sorted out, my depression started. Having only one child, I had plenty of time to think about myself, especially while my child was at school. I often felt that I had been left behind...a feeling that things were going on without me. Very often I reminisced on my life in Germany and spent empty hours...
>
> (Mrs. K5, MI27)

Another wife also emphasised that they wanted to remain in the foreign country as long as possible:

> I had been worried about the new place but I was absorbed in it so quickly that it was like the end of the world when I left, even though it was just three years later...at first I felt displaced. I had not thought about returning home and had not prepared myself to face reality...
>
> (Mrs. T7, MI34)

The above comments confirm Brislin and Van Buren's (1974) statement that sojourners who strongly desire to remain abroad are seen as potentially closed to home country experiences and consequently, experience greater stress in the re-entry transition.

3) Attitude to overseas experience

Level of positive attitude to overseas experience

The respondents' level of positive attitude to the overseas experience was assessed and classified into four categories based on their answers to the question, "How do you perceive your overseas experience?"(Table 4.3.20). There were four of the thirty-five wives who evaluated their overseas experiences as not positive (negative or not entirely positive). They reported that they suffered from homesickness or emotional depressions as a result of such concerns as public safety, language barriers, children's adaptation to the local schools and fear of the demands of the Japanese education system during and after re-entry. However, as

Table 4.3.20 Level of Positive Attitude to Overseas Experience

Level of positiveness	Frequency
Negative	
– Not at all enjoyable as suffered from homesickness	1
total	1
Not entirely positive	
– suffered from a bit of homesickness and emotional depression	1
– suffered from a bit of homesickness and the tight relationship in the Japanese overseas	1
– felt nervous	1
total	3
Positive	
– reasonably enjoyed	7
– was able to relax, felt more relaxed	2
– enjoyable	2
– enjyoable and active	1
– valuable experience, valuable experience for children as well	3
– valuable experience inspite of the language difficulties	1
– enriching experience	1
– a positive change in my life	1
total	18
Very (Quite) positive	
– filfulling	2
– satisfying	1
– precious and pleasant	1
– worthwhile experience	1
– really enjoyed	3
– actively enjoyed	2
– the most enriching experience	1
– the most valuable experience	2
total	13
total	35

can be seen in the table, the majority of the wives reported that their perceptions towards the overseas experiences were positive or very positive.

On the plus side, there were several comments about the physical environment, including the openness, greenness and beauty of living spaces. Many considered the quiet, slow pace of their overseas life as an advantage, and most found that their husbands could spend more time with their families. The lower cost of living was mentioned by some respondents. A typical comment:

> There is space for children to grow here (in the UK) and there is less pressure in the education system here than in Japan. The environment is much better here than in Japan.
>
> (Mrs. T4, MI21)

In addition to the more favourable environment, opportunities for studying and participating in various hobby circles and activities were other factors often commented on. For example, Mrs. S4 (MI30), who categorised her overseas experience in England as very positive, had enjoyed new hobbies whilst they were stationed in London—attending cookery courses, flower arrangement at a local adult education school and also taking English and French language lessons at a college where she met a wide range of women from many countries. Other wives such as Mrs. U2 (MI31), based in Washington D.C., enjoyed new study opportunities and meeting women in the neighbourhood. She had been rather reluctant before departure but she looked back on her overseas experience as "much more enjoyable than I had expected." Her overseas experience certainly gave her a feeling of independence and it raised her self-confidence [see section 4.3.3-4) in this chapter]. She said:

> After one year or so, you will have learned to manage most of the things in your daily life. By then, you'll get used to and enjoy your life abroad. I went through many experiences, which I would never have been able to experience if I'd stayed in Japan all my life. I realised that I could manage things and do something on my own while my husband was away...
>
> (Mrs. U2, MI31)

Generally, with a limited command of the local language and a relatively short stay in the host societies, it is difficult for company-wives to accommodate and to appreciate overseas life fully. In fact, many of them showed little progress in developing friendships with local people. However, daily inconveniences induced by a poor command of the local language did not really result in an overall dissatisfaction of the returnee wives. This can be seen in Mrs. M2's (MI33) comment. She had been active in taking a role as a PTA committee member at her daughter's school. She suggested:

> Most (of the Japanese mothers) felt that they had to do something for their children's school. But when it came to joining the PTA, they were rather reluctant because of the language difficulties and actually they thought it was just too much...I'm not fluent but I always think you don't need to be fluent to get involved in some way.
>
> (Mrs. M2, MI33)

Like most of the wives who perceived their overseas sojourns positively, Mrs. O2 (MI23), who stayed in the U.S.A. a total of 10 years, reported that her overseas experience was valuable and precious for herself even though she had difficulty with the language and got depressed by that at one time. She commented that she was able to get to know many local people, some of whom she came be on close terms with while she was there. She said she was really glad to develop long term friendships through her overseas experiences and still keeps in touch with them. Here it is of interest to note that significantly more of the satisfied wives—as compared to the dissatisfied wives—have maintained contact with host nationals

abroad. It is evident in the cases of Mrs. K3 (MI14), Mrs. O2 (MI23), Mrs. S4 (MI39), who keep in touch with their overseas friends even after several years since returning to Japan.

Although some aspects—the chronic worry about schooling for the children and the effect it would have on the children (before, during and after an overseas sojourn), for example, should not be ignored, the returnee wives generally perceived their sojourn experiences positively and favourably.

The relationship between attitude to overseas experience and overall readjustment

It is reasonable to expect that there is a relationship between the sojourners' level of satisfaction with their overseas life and their readjustment difficulties. The more one perceives the overseas life positively, the more the person may go through re-entry difficulties. It seems that ease of readjustment has a lot to do with how one perceives one's life overseas after re-entry, e.g., it seems that the less positive, the easier the readjustment. The perceived favourableness of the sojourn experience appears to be a key factor. In this study, it was speculated that the more favourable the wives' opinion about the overseas assignment, the more difficult would be their experiences after returning to Japan.

However, if they had not adjusted relatively well and were not happy about their daily life after re-entry, it is possible that they would identify more positively with their previous experiences overseas. This could then affect their perception of their sojourns. Conversely, those who seemed well adjusted to their life in Japan did not

stress the benefits of their overseas experiences. Table 4.3.21 shows the relationship between attitude to overseas experience and overall readjustment.

As can be seen in Table 4.3.21, all of those wives who went through severe readjustment problems (n=8) perceived their overseas experiences to be positive (n=2) or very positive (n=6). Most of those who reported that they had minor readjustment problems also identified their overseas sojourns in the categories of either 'positive' or 'very positive'. Thus, these results indicate that the more wives positively identified with the international assignment, the more they tended to have readjustment problems in general. By comparing to see if there is a difference between those who perceived their overseas experience to be very positive and those in the other categories (Table 4.3.21A), there is also a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of the readjustment problems.

Mrs. K5's case (MI27) was typical of those who perceived their overseas experiences quite positively and experienced a rather difficult transition back to Japan. She stated:

> I noticed a lot of annoying things and irritation when we came back to Japan and started to live our old life again. Even now I miss Germany from time to time. I felt relaxed and at ease in Germany.
>
> (Mrs. K5, MI27)

Table 4.3.21 The Relationship between Level of Positive Attitude to Overseas Experience and Readjustment Problems (1)

Readjustment problems / Attitude to overseas experience	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Negative	1	0	0	1
Not entirely positive	0	3	0	3
Positive	1	15	2	18
Very positive	1	6	6	13
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.036* (*df*= 6, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.050*

Table 4.3.21A The Relationship between Level of Positive Attitude to Overseas Experience and Readjustment Problems (2)

Readjustment problems / Attitude to overseas experience	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Negative/Not entirely positive/Positive	2	18	2	22
Very positive	1	6	6	13
total	3	24	8	35

Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.029*

Mrs. T5 (MI25) commented that there was a big gap between her lifestyle in the U.S.A. and in Japan (See section 4.2.5 in this chapter). She emphasised that she really enjoyed her life in the U.S.A. but she started to suffer from depression when her children had settled in at their new school after re-entry. At the time of the interview, she had consulted a neuro-psychologist but the problem had been going on for nearly a year and she said she had not yet fully recovered from it.

> I felt so empty after the children had settled in at their schools and felt that I had to do something about it. But I just didn't have any idea of what to do or what could be done. One day at a supermarket, I suddenly broke into a cold sweat. My heart was beating faster and I could not stand there any longer. Since

that incident I was not able to go out, especially to public places filled with people, or to get on crowded trains. If I tried to go out, I felt sick and began to be afraid of the crowds...

(Mrs. T5, MI25)

Mrs. S4 (MI30) also reported severe re-entry shock. She said she felt quite empty for the first six months after returning to Japan. She described how she felt then as follows:

When I left the country (England), I felt like crying...I had been able to live my daily life actively there...I missed everything about England...I was completely at a loss from the moment we returned...I had to unpack our cargo but I just wasn't able to do anything and I really felt down...I suddenly faced the reality...It seemed to me I'd never have anything to look forward to in future. I lost all my interests. Everything seemed so uninteresting...Nothing aroused my curiosity. I couldn't help remembering our days in London.

(Mrs. S4, MI30)

One reason why some wives reported their perceptions as very positive and then experienced difficult transitions might be due to the fact that, as Werkman (1986) suggested, returnees often remember their time overseas as a time in which they engaged in an exciting, foreign way of life. Such memories are recalled as an ideal time, the disturbing, boring or unsatisfying moments being forgotten (Werkman, 1986:8). The idealisation of memory occurs because of the wish to ignore unpleasant realities—the discomforts and uncertainties of the past—and to recall

only the happy fulfillments. A preoccupation with nostalgia succeeds in helping one forget the frustrations of the present and the efforts necessary to engage in a new life (p.8-9).

Another reason might be due to a returnee subconsciously not wanting to deny the years spent overseas. This type of self-defence mechanism may strongly relate to the idealisation. Denying a part of one's past can only lead to psychological hardships in the present. These issues will be discussed in the later section, 'Coping Strategy' in Chapter 5.

4) Value change as a result of living abroad

<u>Changed values as a result of living abroad</u>

The variety of answers given by the respondents to the question "What changes did you see in yourself brought about by living abroad?" were classified into four categories: 'raised cross-cultural awareness', 'increased self-confidence and self-awareness', 'broadened views in general' and 'didn't see any changes in myself'. As can be seen in Table 4.3.22, 'increased self-confidence or self-awareness' was the most frequently mentioned phenomenon.

Wives living overseas acquire new competencies to help them adapt to new situations smoothly. They must learn new ways to shop, how to interact with a variety of people, which local activities to take part in. Mastery of this knowledge makes their lives easier overseas, and contributes to their feelings of independence and accomplishment. Fifteen of the thirty-five wives interviewed reported changes

Table 4.3.22 Value Change as a Result of Living Abroad

As a result of living abroad, I experienced… (the first responses)	Frequency
raised cross-cultural awareness	
– became tolerant of other cultures/people, reduced my stereotypical responses, became more open to and interested in other people and their ideas	4
– felt much deeper	1
– became more considerate of the feelings of others	1
– came to perceive each country individually	1
total	7
increased self-confidence and self-awareness	
– felt more confident, gave me a feeling of independence, became more able to cope with things	7
– felt better in myself, increased my well-being	1
– felt a lot more mature	1
– gained objective views about myself	1
– felt that I'd be able to get on well with my life anywhere	1
– became used to expressing opinions straightforwardly	3
– realised what I can do and what I can't do	1
total	15
broadened views in general	
– gained flexibility in thinking and in doing things and increased my volunteer spirit	1
– gained chances to see things from a different perspective (and evaluate them), gained broadened views	7
– came to have more relaxed attitudes about things	2
total	10
didn't see any changes in myself	3
total	3
total	35

in their self-confidence levels as a result of living abroad and they offered virtually identical reasons for this: coping with unfamiliar lifestyles, having to communicate in another language effectively and doing things that they had never done or tried before. Such experiences had increased their levels of confidence and independence. A wife who lived in the U.K. for five years put the effects on her self-confidence of living abroad as:

Coping with the unfamiliar environment, having to communicate in English

and doing things that I had never done or tried before...Those experiences certainly increased my level of confidence. I found I learned more about how to cope with things, and I feel better in myself and feel that I can do more things and can manage most things.

(Mrs. T4, MI21)

Some other wives emphasised that they felt different and more confident after having lived abroad:

I found myself as a person who could challenge and question established ideas. I felt better in myself, I was able to do more things and my whole personality felt better, my whole well-being, I suppose you could say, 'felt better'...I felt more confident in myself...that experience made a lot of difference to my well-being and self-confidence.

(Mrs. N1, PI1)

I found I was learning more about how to cope...How to get myself about in an unfamiliar environment, how to relate to people, how to keep going, how to deal with daily problems, all that sort of thing...I'd never been out of my small town until I went to America...Then when I came back, I felt a lot better about myself. I felt a lot more mature, a lot more confident...

(Mrs. T1, PI2)

Those who have been exposed to a different culture are likely to increase their tolerance and acceptance of other people without regard to nationality or race.

Those who were involved in the local life, if they actively participated in it and felt accepted, as was the case with those wives who had adjusted well to the host society, have less need to cling to their own nationality. And they tend to accept others, who are different from themselves, more readily. They agreed that they "learned that there was more than one way, the Japanese way, to live a life".

Mrs. K3 (MI14) reported that her years of staying in the U.S.A. made her more internationally minded, gave her more tolerance, and the power to embrace many things which otherwise she would not have been able to do.

> Having a different experience by coming into contact with those people and seeing a different world, I realised that even if things are not going well in Japan, I could go to a different place and manage to live there. I used to feel that I was at a loss when things were not going well with me. But the experience of living in a foreign country made me feel that I'd be able to get on well with my life anywhere.
>
> (Mrs. K3, MI14)

On the value of her personal experience in Germany, another wife said:

> My experience in Germany has given me a chance to look at things from a different view point. There were different kinds of people. Now I feel I'm more open to and interested in other people and their ideas...I feel I've become more tolerant of the differences than I was before...
>
> (Mrs. T2, MI13)

One wife reported that both children and adults unconsciously developed a tolerance for all people:

> I think I've had more patience with 'differences' since we were sent abroad. Not only did it broaden my own experience, but also for our children, I suppose...You've actually got to live out there and live in that society and culture...The exposure to a new culture was fascinating and enlightening. I feel that it helped greatly to make our children tolerant and more understanding of people of different cultures...Our ten years abroad were the most enriching of our lives. It was not an easy ten years, but no ten years in Japan would have given our family so many valuable experiences, so many friends, or this kind of opportunity to give help and accept help.
>
> (Mrs. N2, PI3)

There were other wives who offered the view that they had learned about themselves through the extended foreign sojourn. Both the sojourn and the re-entry can be said to be opportunities for looking at oneself objectively. Some commented on the effects on their personality of living abroad. For example, Mrs. T3 (MI18) reported a perceived change in herself. Through her American experience, she learned that if something has not been put into words, it has not been communicated. She learned a different way of speaking such as expressing opinions straightforwardly which, as a result, would make her stand out from others in her home environment.

> They (the Japanese people) are lacking a sense of public manners. While I was

waiting for a train on the platform, a train came, and there were some people who bumped into me and rushed to the train without even saying "sorry". When I was at a supermarket and waiting to pay in the queue, there were some people who jumped the queue. And nobody said anything about it...I was unable to ignore it and said something like "Wait for your turn!" several times...only to find that I was being stared at. There was an awkward silence afterwards.

(Mrs. T3, MI18)

Mrs. T3's example at the supermarket reveals the outspokenness of returning mothers. Even Mrs. K4 (MI22), who perceived her overseas stay rather negatively, reported a similar change brought about in herself by living in Germany:

I just feel people in Japan tend to hold back their opinions: "Silence is golden." I found that when I attended a PTA meeting at my children's school, they just kept quiet. It doesn't only happen in schools but on every occasion. They just won't say a word even though they have something in mind. I used to be like that. While I was in Germany, I felt that I learned to speak out about my thoughts while I was listening to others.

(Mrs. K4, MI22)

Those who managed to come through the sojourn successfully were often proud of their strength of character and became more confident in their self-images, and as a result their own self-confidence had risen. Overall, most returnee wives interviewed in this study were satisfied with their efforts and internalised positive self-images after re-entry.

The relationship between value change as a result of living abroad and overall readjustment

Previous studies (e.g., Sussman, 2000, 2002) suggested that those who had adjusted well to foreign countries had more difficulties in readjusting to their home environment because their new ideas, behaviour and identity conflicted with the traditional counterparts of the home society. It is assumed that a change in the returnee wives' values is one of the major factors that influence re-entry adjustment. Some respondents in this interview also described their value changes and re-entry adjustment difficulties. One returnee wife expressed her intense re-entry problems by stating, "I found that I unconsciously adopted American values—not always the same as those in Japan" (Mrs. K3, PI10).

Table 4.3.23 presents the relationship between reported value change and overall readjustment. Since the majority of the wives interviewed reported positive value changes as a result of living abroad (n=32), and all three of the wives who reported no change in their values experienced minor readjustment difficulties, it is difficult to conclude in this study that the wives' value changes from their overseas stays increased the level of intensity of their re-entry problems.

Table 4.3.23 The Relationship between Value Change as a Result of Living Abroad and Readjustment Problems

Readjustment problems / Reported value change	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Positive value change	3	21	8	32
No value change	0	3	0	3
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.471(NS) (df= 2, N= 35)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.912(NS)

However, as expected, all of those who went through severe readjustment difficulties (n=8) reported that they had undergone positive shifts in their values, either in increased self-confidence or broadened views and raised tolerance to different cultures. These special competences are of little use when they return to their home culture. Those who stayed behind have no way of knowing exactly what the returnee went through or how they have been changed by their overseas experiences. Old friends and relatives remember them more or less as they were when they left Japan. The fact is that if they did allow themselves to be exposed to or immersed in a foreign culture, they will not be the same people they used to be. For instance, Mrs. F2 (MI17), a wife who returned from Malaysia, described the changes in her values and other people's perceptions as follows:

> If you ever lived in a foreign country, you'd feel that you were a different person...When you live in an unfamiliar environment, you've got to adjust yourself...If you've come back from even one year abroad and gone to your old friends and neighbours, you may know just how lonely this could make you feel. People are less interested in your experiences...Although you've changed a lot, they are unable to comprehend that you've experienced a lot in the foreign country. I suppose that gives you a feeling of discomfort.
>
> (Mrs. F2, MI17)

It may be in this area where returnees have trouble and feel disappointed. They tend to come back knowing that they have this extra sense of accomplishment and competence and expecting that everybody else would like to know about it. They feel, "You might want to listen to me because I've got this extra experience", but

this does not apply. They may find not only that what they have learned does not get them anywhere, but also that it irritates people around them.

5) Thoughts about being a company-wife

This section is concerned with the wives' involvement with, and their attitudes to the companies, which employ their husbands. It also focuses on their thoughts about expected roles to be performed as wives of overseas employees. There is a notion that overseas employees who are happy, well adjusted and not disturbed by family concerns can concentrate better on their assignments in the foreign country. In addition to maintaining their households and keeping their families together and happy, company-wives are considered essential elements at company-organised social gatherings, by taking a role in their husbands' jobs, participating in company-organised dinners, or entertaining other colleagues and business associates at home. Most informants clearly understood their roles. They considered their activities important to their husbands' careers. As one wife said:

> One has the feeling that the company expects this of you—to participate and be involved in the husband's work. They don't come right out and say this in so many words, but you just know it is what they want you to do...
>
> (Mrs. N1, PI1)

As can be seen in Table 4.3.24 most wives interviewed showed a relaxed attitude towards performing company-wives' roles. Most of them did not seem to mind entertaining at home as this was much less frequent than had been expected

Table 4.3.24 Thoughts about Being a Company-wife

Responses		Frequency
Positive responses		
・didn't have so many occasions to take part in my husband's work, to entertain guests at home, to attend company-organised parties… so didn't mind perfoming the comapany-wife's roles occasionally		12
・didn't have so many occasions to take part in my husband's work, to entertain guests at home, to attend company-organised parties… so didn't feel any pressure/responsibility to perform the company-wife's roles		11
・didn't have so many occasions to take part in my husband's work, to entertain guests at home, to attend company-organised parties… but tried to look after new families, when they needed me, until they settled down		1
・tried to do as much as I could. Thought it was good to experience different sorts of things which would pay us off later. It was like a club activity in school days...		1
	total	27
Negative responses		
・found it difficult to get along with the other company-wives, got involved in the problems among the other wives in the same company		2
・felt pressure to entertain, inviting people into our home and socialising as the wife of Mr. A of Company B		2
・got annoyed by being forced to attend welcome and farewell parties or to go to the airport to see off those who returned to Japan		1
・felt a bit relieved after returning, not to be forced to entertain at home or to have to associate with people I wasn't fond of		1
・felt relieved after returning to be freed from being just the wife of Mr .C of CompanyD.		1
・Feel much more in control of what's going on in myself		
・made a minimum contribution as an overseas company-wife, as my situation was a bit different (no children) and kept some distance from other company-wives as it seemed the relationship was 'sticky'…		1
	total	8
	total	35

among these wives. A typical comment:

> I didn't feel any pressure from my husband's company. Actually, I didn't do much duty entertaining at home and we rarely had any business people at our house. But I was involved with trying to look after newly arriving families, when they needed me, until they settled down and started their own lives in their new

homes.

(Mrs. H, MI15)

For most of them, the firm's social occasions were also fairly infrequent events. Several wives reported that they had not been to any social occasions arranged by the firm simply because none had been arranged. One wife commented:

> I'd heard that there were many company occasions, including the coming and going of official visitors, entertaining at home, participating in company parties and helping new families from Japan who needed assistance, but there weren't any from my husband's company except for the annual Christmas party. I don't think I felt any pressure...
>
> (Mrs. O1, PI8)

Whilst most wives reported that they did not feel pressure or responsibility to perform company-wives' roles or did not mind performing these roles, there were some wives who reported that they did feel pressure to perform expected roles:

> If the wife of your husband's superior wants you to do something...like organising welcome and farewell parties, you should be there to help out. If a new family moves in, you have to go to them immediately and help them out until they settle in. You must be an active member of the ladies' circle whether you like it or not, and participate in everything she wants you to do...It is compulsory though nobody says it in an obvious way. "Unwritten laws", I'd say. There was a tacit understanding among us...If you do not comply with it, you'll

be rejected by the other wives behind your back...

(Mrs. K5, MI27)

If you go abroad, you've just got to do the correct thing. You have no choice. They don't say this in so many words, but you just know what they want you to do. I met a wife who worked very hard to play the role of a good partner to her husband, I mean, she was very much involved in that sense. I just felt I'd only be able to do half as much as she did...

(Mrs. S4, MI30)

The degree of wives' involvement in their husbands' work seemed to vary according to the size of the company (the number of Japanese overseas employees and their families), the type of industry (the bankers and large business firms, the small firms or the private corporations, civilian government officials), and the way the immediate superiors treated their subordinates. For example, Mrs. U2 (MI31) said, "I did not feel any pressure from it...My husband's immediate boss at that time didn't like to force his subordinates' spouses to perform the traditional company-wives' roles or put them in a complicated rank-order system according to their husbands' positions. In addition, my husband belonged to the New York office and his immediate boss actually worked in Washington".

Some other wives reported that they had found it difficult to relate to other company-wives. As the wives' performance in the Japanese overseas communities is often thought to be a measure of achievement in their husbands' advancement, company-wives of colleagues may have to socialise with one another. One wife

described how, "Everyone knows who you are: Mrs. A of Company B, and your every move comes under close scrutiny." And sometimes there is no escape from the forced socialising:

> After six months or so, I started feeling a bit annoyed. We met regularly, several times a week, which I thought a bit too much. I was often invited to participate in various hobby circles and other activities, such as flower arrangement and 'shadow box',...I tried to join them, say, one in four times...Getting a job at the supplementary school gave me a good excuse to be able to escape from them. I was able to excuse myself and keep myself busy without associating with the other wives.
>
> (Mrs. F3, MI24)

One thing that should be noted is that, as Mrs. M2 (MI33) suggested, the environment surrounding the company-wives and the traditionally expected roles of those company-wives have been changing recently as more and more younger employees and their families are sent to carry out overseas assignments. Mrs. M2 (MI33) admitted that at one time she got annoyed as she was forced to attend welcome and farewell parties or to go to the airport with those who were returning to Japan. She said:

> There had been an argument among us. When somebody returns to Japan, all the other employees and their families, even children, got together at the airport to see them off. It was so weird. There were just too many Japanese, a huge group. Then they decided to do farewell parties at Nikko Hotel instead of

gathering at the airport. Most of those old customs have been given up recently as the families posted are getting younger.

(Mrs. M2, MI33)

Mrs. K1 (PI7) also agreed with this by saying:

I've heard that former *chuzaiin*'s wives had to live up to certain expectations from their husbands' companies, to play company-wive's roles to some extent, though I think things are changing nowadays...We had less pressure to behave in that way as younger families are now receiving overseas assignments. You really do not have to worry so much about the relationships within your husband's company...

(Mrs. K1, PI7)

The relationship between thoughts about being a company-wife and overall readjustment

In general, during the overseas assignment, a wife's participation in her husband's work is likely to be emphasised. In her book about company-wives' overseas experiences, Muto (1994) reported that most of her interviewees admitted that they would like to have had more contact with their husbands' work situations. Some even complained about the absence of any opportunities to take part in them as, once they returned to Japan, there is very little contact, either informal or formal, between wives and their husbands' companies. According to Muto (1994), the lack of contact was considered by some returnee wives to be a disappointment, mainly because they used to play a role as a company-wife, which gave them

increased self-confidence.

In this present study, among those who made positive comments on performing these roles, few wives considered these activities as fulfilling or exciting. They did not seem to have a strong consciousness of being a company-wife. This may be due to the facts that they simply did not have many occasions to get involved in their husbands' work and that they belonged to the younger generation of '*chuzaiin*'s' wife who were not expected to perform traditional roles, or that they regarded these activities as not something which had given them a feeling of satisfaction and self-confidence.

Table 4.3.25 shows the relationships between the returnee wives' thoughts about performing company-wives' roles and the degree of their readjustment difficulties. As can be seen in Table 4.3.25, there seems to be no clear relationship between the wives' views of being a company-wife and their readjustment difficulties. Amongst the five wives who viewed their company-wife roles positively and experienced severe readjustment problems, none of them stated in an obvious way that they had a difficult re-entry adjustment because of the lack of contact with their husbands' jobs or the loss of company-wives' status. However, a closer examination of individual cases suggests some indications that for several wives, their reported feelings of aimlessness and emptiness after re-entry might have partly stemmed from their ambiguous situation, i.e., being unimportant as far as the company is concerned. These wives might have adopted new roles during their husbands' overseas assignments, which are no longer necessary after they return home.

Table 4.3.25 The Relationship between Thoughts about Being a Company-wife and Readjustment Problems

Readjustment problems / Thoughts about being a company-wife	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Positive views didn't mind, no pressure, willing to do…	2	20	5	27
Negative views felt pressure, got annoyed, found it difficult to get along with other wives…	1	4	3	8
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.431(NS) (df= 2, N= 35)
Mann-Whitney U test: p= 0.556(NS)

In their home country, they are no longer expected to perform the roles equivalent to the one during their assignment. The following interview extract gives an idea regarding how some company-wives felt about the loss of those responsibilities:

> After I returned to Japan, I stayed at home. For a year I couldn't make friends in this area. I was not able to do what I used to do in the U.S. That was really frustrating. I felt so depressed and empty. I just wanted to find something which I could do to fulfill myself...
>
> (Mrs. O2, MI23)

Mrs. O2 (MI23) had been busy in the U.S.A. by actively taking part in her husband's work on many occasions. She said she improved her cooking skills and other social skills in the organisation culture. Because there is no place for her to participate in her husband's career in the company's activities in Japan, she might have experienced relative disappointment and felt isolated from her husband's career.

On the other hand, for those who were annoyed in performing their expected roles and relating to other company-wives, as in the cases of Mrs. F3 (MI24) and Mrs. K4 (MI22), they felt freer as they were able to choose how much socialising they did, to decide how much they wanted to see of certain people. Mrs. N3 (PI5) described how she felt about being back to 'being herself' after returning to Japan as follows:

> I wasn't enjoying the role of a head teacher's wife. It's a sort of relief to be freed from being "the wife of the head master". Being back in Japan and back to my own teaching job, I feel much more in control of what's going on in myself.
>
> (Mrs. N3, PI5)

Overall, as can be seen in Table 4.3.25, there are no clear relationships found between the wives' involvement in or their willingness to participate in their husbands' work during the overseas assignment and the degree of readjustment difficulty.

6) Perceptions about Japan

The returnee wives' initial impressions on returning to the home culture were very mixed. They were happy to be home after their absence and to see their families and friends. They also felt free of the tension of living among foreigners in an insecure environment. Most wives remarked that they were relieved as they came back to familiar surroundings where public peace and safety were relatively well maintained. The following were typical comments:

After all I was happy being back home. It's not only me who thinks this way, I suppose.

(Mrs. T1, PI2)

Having arrived back in my own country and being able to speak my own language, I felt really at home as I could say anything that I thought, felt or wanted in my own language.

(Mrs. H, MI15)

Table 4.3.26 shows the results of the interview data by content analysing the responses to the question "In what way has your overseas stay affected your view of Japan—positive? negative?" As can be seen in Table 4.3.26, the majority of the wives interviewed, especially those returning from the United States, were overwhelmed by the shock of contrast with the foreign countries in terms of physical environment—overcrowding, narrow streets. Some typical reactions:

The crowds, the tiny houses, the heavy concentration of everything. Everything looked rather poor, which was something I hadn't noticed before.

(Mrs. F1, PI4)

For the first few months back here, I'd been extremely tired. It was so crowded everywhere. Everything was too small and narrow...My eyes notice the less attractive aspects of Japanese life—the noise, over-crowding, frantic pace, miserable housing conditions...

(Mrs. T1, PI2)

Table 4.3.26 Perceptions about Japan

Initial Responses on returning to Japan		Frequency
Positive Responses		
・felt at home		3
・tried to find good things in the old environment and fit in there		1
・couldn't find any negative things about Japan as always wanted to come home		1
・climate: appreciated the distinct four seasons		1
・found everything is convenient		1
・found people considerate		1
	total	8
Neutral Responses		
・tried not to compare the overseas life with the home environment		1
・not bothered as could not say which is good or bad, or better or worse		1
	total	2
Negative Responses		
・discontented with its people (mentality) inconsiderate, narrow-minded, intolerant, materialistic, spendthrift, lacking volunteer spirits, lacking individuality, uniformity, not caring, lacking self-expressions, nosiness, etc.		20
・discontented with its physical environment over-crowdedness, tiny houses, heavy concentration, busy/narrow streets, poor social facilities		15
・got annoyed by the human relationships (including those with extended families)		8
・discontented with lifestyle the husbands sacrifice their personal lives to serve the company, the couples live separate lives, family lifestyles are so different, felt closer while abroad		5
・got annoyed by the way Japanese media present things, as they are biased		2
・got annoyed by the traditional customs		3
	total	53

(multiple responses)

Perceptions about Japan were most directly expressed in physical environment aspects such as living conditions, public facilities, entertainment/recreation facilities and opportunities, general cost of living and climate. When the families returned to Tokyo, they found that much had changed. First, because of the soaring real estate prices, they could not afford housing equivalent to the home they had lived in before they left Japan. Second, the household income had

suddenly shrunk drastically as the incentives for the overseas assignment are generous and the cost of living in Japan had leapt upwards. When they returned, they noticed the contrast clearly and that made them frustrated. As several wives said:

> We thought we were special overseas...Returning home often means a reduction in status. We're now one of many...Most ex-pats spend freely there in Malaysia, employing all those servants...their life at home isn't so wonderful. They go home to their own country and must do their own housework...There's no direct comparison. Once you compare you become dissatisfied and depressed.
>
> (Mrs. N1, PI1)

> I expected our financial situation would be worse and actually it was. Everything was very expensive. There are abundant materials in Japan, but there is no spiritual satisfaction. Our house was too small to live in... I shouldn't have compared, though I couldn't help doing it...Our children were in bad moods after coming home. We knew the housing situation in Japan but they were very young when we left Japan, and too young to remember the difference.
>
> (Mrs. K1, PI7)

> I used to play a lot of golf and tennis over there. Now? Well not as much as I would like to. It's a matter of money, like everything else I suppose. I play a bit of tennis, but not on a regular basis, time and money are always hard to find although I expect I really should make more of an effort...Yes, it seems to be a common problem among returnee wives.

(Mrs. F1, PI4)

I think the lowest standard of living is much higher there than here. Even if you don't make a lot of money, you can still enjoy your life over there. The cost of living is less and the social environment allows you to do so. Whereas in Japan, only those who achieve a certain degree of income level can live affordable lives...

(Mrs. K3, MI14)

Most returnee wives interviewed for this study agreed that they could not help comparing the new culture with home but they did not equate or "level" the two countries in terms of physical environment. Instead, some found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the lower standard of living in their home country after staying abroad. As Mrs. T2 (MI13) found, learning to get along in the physical environment again was only a minor problem. Among those respondents indicating difficulty in making this adjustment at the time of re-entry, most soon realised that it would just take time and they were eventually able to readjust to the traditions of their home country. Even though they found it difficult to make this adjustment, most said that they had learned to accept conditions in their home country and had eventually adjusted to the standards of living back home. Typical comments were:

Japan is like this...I started to be more adapted in the second year. I adapted to the pace of Japanese life.

(Mrs. K1, PI7)

> The individual space is really limited. I just couldn't stand the crowdedness here. But I have overcome all these differences now. When I returned, I noticed the contrast clearly and this made me complain. However, I soon realised that I would eventually be able to readjust to the conditions of my country.
>
> (Mrs. T3, MI18)

Several returnee wives reported that they had learned some new aspects of their own culture as well as the foreign culture. They commented that what they learned from their encounter with another culture facilitated their ability to think deeply about what they had considered 'normal' in their own country. Returnees might discover new aspects of Japan and its people, which they had previously thought they knew a lot about. Those who indicated that they had come to view the home country from a different perspective had become a little more critical towards their own culture than to the foreign country's.

The content analysis of the interview data determined that, in their answers about Japanese people, the majority of the returnee wives tended to be evaluative and critical. Other than the differences in the physical environment, they found it hard to accept the mentality of Japanese people which was characterised as intolerant, materialistic, narrow-minded, group-oriented, indecisive and inconsiderate:

> When I think of the local people who lived around us, I just wonder if we could treat foreigners here in the way they did for us over there. I feel that people here are so inflexible. They just won't admit any exception to the group norm. Things are slightly better these days, I think, though it still isn't a caring society for the

children, the old and people who are different...

(Mrs. T2, MI13)

In Singapore, the society as a whole is generous to the children and the elderly. Children are considered as valuable assets. Whereas in Japan, people, especially those who are young, seem indifferent. They are busy with their own lives...I felt that people in Singapore are more considerate towards others...

(Mrs. Y, MI16)

Returning from the U.S.A., Mrs. K3 (MI14) found Japanese social life to be even more uniform and superficial than she had remembered. She found the standard to be a material outlook and a loss of individuality. Like Mrs. K3 (MI14), those who reported negative perceptions about Japan after re-entry, not in terms of physical environment but in people's mindsets, tend to exhibit more uneasiness when they interact with other mothers and their old friends. Several other wives described Japan as a 'spendthrift country' and criticised its people as too uniform and lacking individuality. Mrs. K5 (MI27) reported, "People here are too concerned to follow the fashions, from the clothes they wear to the foods they eat, but people in Germany live in a more economical way. There is nothing that is wasted, everything is recycled. They just don't spend money on unnecessary things. Most people here are wasteful and keep on buying".

One other comment frequently mentioned regarding Japanese people was that they did not seem to have a sense of public manners. Several wives agreed, as follows:

Nobody holds the door for the next person. Especially Japanese men. At one time, I had to hold the door for four or five middle-aged business people...I feel Japanese people are not very considerate to others. They just don't seem to have time to spare and won't sacrifice themselves for other people. I feel this way because when I was in America, I was treated very well and people around me offered help whenever I had a problem.

(Mrs. T5, MI25)

I was just surprised to see most people had mobile phones, and they didn't seem to mind talking on the phone in public places...very loudly in trains...which was something you just wouldn't believe if you lived in Germany..."

(Mrs. K5, MI27)

I very much feel that Japanese men are arrogant or rude when I compare them with English men. I think they are generally kind and courteous. I got annoyed because Japanese men do not say "Thank you" for any help I offer. Their public manners are really bad. When I opened the door for a man, he did not even look at me and left without saying anything. When I waited for a train on the platform, they all rushed to the train by pushing the ladies ahead of them and just tried to get seats for themselves.

(Mrs. T4, MI21)

Some wives referred to the lack of volunteer spirit among the Japanese people. By communicating with other American women, Mrs. O3 (MI26) reported that she became familiar with the American spirit of women who worked for other people

for no money, especially in helping children at school and supporting foreign sojourners in adapting to life in America:

> I really appreciate those local mothers who helped me to adapt in the unfamiliar environment. Even though I wasn't able to do a lot when I was at my daughter's school, they thanked me for what I'd done. I think I've learned how to treat people who are in need and I thought, when I returned to Japan, that I'd want to help other people in that way...There are some foreign mothers in my boy's nursery school, and I've been trying to help them out, as I remembered my experience in the U.S...
>
> (Mrs. O3, MI26)

As can be seen in section 4.3.3-4) 'Value change as a result of living abroad', there are several common phenomena occurring among returnee wives. One is their change in self-expression, which is said to be a normal characteristic gained by returnees who have resided in the U.S.A. and other Western countries. Mrs. K2 (PI10) is a typical example and she had a critical account describing the discrepancies between the two cultures in regard to how much or how far an individual should go in expressing her opinion. This is especially the case when she carries out her duties as a PTA officer and she tends to be critical of Japanese mothers as a group for their lack of initiative and their inability to think independently:

> Some of them are just impossible...I've been thinking, "Why don't they work more willingly and voluntarily like American mothers do? Why don't they accept

their responsibilities with a good grace?", things like that...I really feel those who don't mind doing the work there would just sign up for it and do it. It never works that way here though.

(Mrs. K2, PI10)

Overall, comparing the public and private environments in the foreign countries to those of Japan, most of the wives agreed that those overseas had better conditions, more space and more resources. Some of these factors which were mentioned in the interviews are obvious, like more spacious homes and the lower cost of living that are typical in the West, but the details have also revealed more subtle reasons for negative perceptions towards Japan. Some cited the values, ethics and customs in Japanese society. For example, the habits and traits of people in Japan in identifying themselves strongly with groups, such as their companies or schools, instead of the individualism practiced elsewhere. Some returnee wives are still bothered by the group mentality in Japan, the lack of individuality, the attitudes towards children and the elderly, the lack of volunteer spirit, the lack of a sense of public manners and what one termed, "the appalling lack of international perspective".

<u>The relationship between perceptions about Japan and overall readjustment</u>

Previous studies found that a general reduction in lifestyle, i.e., financial reduction, downward shift in social status and poorer housing conditions, is one of the important problems associated with repatriation (e.g., Clague & Krupp, 1978; Kendall, 1981). As discussed in the previous section, some returnee wives found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the lower standard of living in Japan after they

had stayed abroad. It is reasonable to think that those who had more critical attitudes towards the home country would be more likely to experience higher levels of stress in the re-entry process. This is derived from the premise that returnee wives' exposure to a different culture is likely to increase their objective views of their home country. On the other hand, if the returnees have a strong desire to return home with an idealised view of the home country, they have less need to cling to their overseas lives, and they tend to accept the home environment more readily. This was the case of Mrs K4 (MI22), who said "I missed Japan so much and was so glad to come back here, so I didn't find any negative things about Japan". Table 4.3.27 shows these tendencies.

Table 4.3.27 The Relationship between Perceptions about Japan and Readjustment Problems

Readjustment problems / Perceptions about Japan	No readjustment problems	Minor readjustment problems	Severe readjustment problems	total
Positive responses	2	0	1	3
Nutral responses (including those who indicated both positive and negative aspects)	0	3	0	3
Negative responses	1	21	7	29
total	3	24	8	35

Fisher-Freeman-Halton test: p= 0.024* (*df*= 4, N= 35)
Kruskal-Wallis test: p= 0.442

In this study, there was a tendency that those who had more critical attitudes towards the home country would be more likely to experience stress in the re-entry process. Examining the comments by many of the returnee wives in response to the question regarding perceptions about the home country, one possible explanation for the impact of negative perceptions of Japan on general adjustment stems from the value change experienced by returnee wives as a result of living abroad. Their responses reflected greater objectivity and flexibility in thinking,

and greater tolerance of different points of view. The period of time spent in another culture may make sojourners more aware of aspects of their home culture of which they were previously unaware. It seems to be true that we sometimes learn more about something by being away from it. Mrs. F3 (MI24) reported as follows:

> It (the overseas experience) definitely affected my views of Japan in several ways. I came to perceive my country in a very different way. It may have something to do with general ideas...I've realised good things about Japan from the outsider's point of view, and at the same time, I felt that certain things in this country have to be improved or reformed, when I compare our system with that of the U.S. I'd never thought of things like these before going to America.
>
> (Mrs. F3, MI24)

Sussman (2001, 2002) proposed a hypothesis stating that the weaker the home country identity, the more the repatriation distress. That is, repatriation distress is increased the more repatriates feel negatively towards their home country, the more estranged they feel from their compatriots, the less central their home country identity is to their self-concept and the less they believe that compatriots perceive them as similar (2002:395). The returnee wives who experienced severe readjustment problems during their repatriation to the home society felt estranged from the Japanese identity. Their identification with Japanese cultural norms and values was comparatively weak. This might be partly due to the value change experienced by returnee wives as a result of living abroad as their responses reflected greater objectivity, flexibility in thinking and tolerance of

different points of view. This cultural heterogeneity and tolerance for cultural identity variability, are characteristics opposite to Japanese cultural norms. On the other hand, several returnee wives who experienced lower readjustment stress possessed a relatively positive feeling towards their home culture.

In this section, various factors which seemed to be potentially important for investigating the Japanese returnee wives' readjustment were examined. In order to see if there were significant differences in the overall readjustment levels of participants, some statistical tests were performed on the sample data. In summary, the findings from the results of this section can be stated as follows:

1. Foreign location and overall integration into the foreign culture

It was found that the wives' re-entry transition did not systematically vary according to the geographic area, i.e., the country from which they had returned did not seem to make a difference to their readjustment. Also, there was no evidence of differences in readjustment in terms of foreign location or whether they resided in an English-speaking country.

There was a tendency to suggest that the more the wives participated in local activities and had frequent interaction with host country nationals during their overseas sojourn, the less they stayed within the Japanese circles. And those who had actively participated in the local community were more likely to have readjustment difficulties than those who had been involved more in the Japanese community.

There was a relationship between the self-reported level of integration into the foreign culture and readjustment difficulties. The returnee wives who perceived themselves as integrated into the foreign culture to a greater degree tended to experience a more difficult re-entry transition.

The degree of local language fluency also seemed to relate to their participation in the host culture however, the effect of local language fluency was not evident in their re-entry transitions. There seemed to be no clear pattern in terms of the differences in local language fluency and the readjustment difficulties experienced.

2. Time spent abroad, number of years elapsed since returning, and multiple periods spent abroad

Longer overseas stays did not clearly affect the returnee wives' transitions back home. There was not a relationship between the length of time an individual was exposed to a foreign culture and the reintegration in the home culture. And also, the number of years elapsed since returning to Japan did not significantly predict general repatriation adjustment.

The assumption that previous re-entry experience(s) would lead to ease in readjustment to the home culture was not supported by the results of this study. Some of the repeaters (those who had multiple experiences of expatriation and repatriation) reported that they felt even more depressed during their second or third repatriation period.

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wives who reported no change in their values experienced minor readjustment difficulties.

7. Thoughts about being a company-wife

Most wives interviewed showed relaxed attitudes towards performing company-wives' roles. Entertaining at home for business purposes and taking part in company-organised parties did not seem to play a very large part in the overseas lives of the wives in this study. Amongst those who made positive comments on performing these roles, few wives considered these activities fulfilling or exciting. There seems to be no clear relationship between the wives' views of being a company-wife and their readjustment difficulties. Amongst the five wives who positively viewed their company-wives' roles and experienced severe readjustment problems, none of them stated in an obvious way that they had a difficult re-entry adjustment because of the lack of contact with their husbands' jobs or the loss of their company-wives' status after re-entry.

8. Perceptions about Japan

Negative perceptions about Japan were most directly expressed in terms of the physical environment. Living conditions, public facilities, entertainment/ recreation facilities and opportunities, general cost of living and climate were mentioned. However, negative remarks from the returnee wives went beyond the simple physical environment, encompassing the whole range of Japan's culture and people, from stressful human relationships and the different family lifestyles to the insular Japanese mentality. There was a slight tendency that those who had more critical attitudes towards the home country would more likely to experience

higher stress in the re-entry process. This might be partly due to the value change of returnee wives as a result of living abroad.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The first section of Chapter 4 presented descriptive information about the respondents and their families, providing general characteristics of the informants and their families during and after their overseas sojourns. In the next section, the results of the interviews focusing on the returnee wives' readjustment problems were collated and discussed. For some returnee wives, re-entry shock and readjustment difficulties were described by the anxiety, confusion, disappointment and frustration, which resulted when they tried to re-establish themselves in their own culture after a prolonged absence. The next section, the second part of the data analysis, examined how various factors, such as host culture variables, time factors, and attitudinal variables, had influenced the returnee wives' readjustment difficulties and problems. The results suggested that their adjustment difficulties and strategies were influenced by such factors as re-entry situations (including the cultural values and norms of the Japanese society, work and career related issues) and social support, and they led to certain outcomes in terms of levels of difficulty experienced and ease of transition back home. Situational factors were not equally important for every re-entry adjustment, as their influences were subject to several moderators. Thus, the attitudinal variables (self-rated levels of integration into the foreign culture, desire to return home, attitude to overseas experience and perceptions about Japan) seemed to have a more significant effect on the returnee wives' readjustment to their home environment. The findings generally conformed

to expectations and to the findings of previous re-entry researches however, possible reasons for the unexpected findings were also discussed.

Chapter 5 Returnee Women and the Japanese Society

Chapter 5 reflects on some of the main themes in the returnee wives' readjustment experiences which have emerged from the research. As can be seen in Chapter 4, the re-entry shock experienced by Japanese returnee wives is a complex subject. However, the approach taken in the further examination and discussion seeks to focus on the specific nature of Japanese society, which is characterised by social and cultural homogeneity and conformity. This chapter describes the extent to which the Japanese culture puts pressure on the human relationships of women returnees. It will do this by examining the following five areas:

1. The effects of the overseas sojourn on membership of and identification with social groups—the emphasis on group belongingness and what it means to be a member of the *uchi* in Japanese society.
2. 'Impurity'—by drawing on the issue of character pollution as a result of living abroad and taking into account the Japanese ideologies of social and cultural homogeneity.
3. The significance of crossing socio-cultural boundaries in Japanese society. This limits returnees' group membership and can place them on the borderlines as marginal members.
4. Coping strategies used by the returnee wives, whose re-entry problems differ, depending to some degree on their circumstances. This section also presents three short life histories of returnee wives to aid understanding of the coping strategies used to deal with their readjustment stresses.
5. In the last section, issues regarding returnee women and work will be presented.

Because of the husbands' overseas transfers, the wives' own careers and education are frequently interrupted or even terminated. This can bring major disruption to their lives and career plans after re-entry. This section focuses on the returnee wives' own attitudes about women working outside home and their problems in starting/restarting their own careers.

5.1 Group Distinction

Returnee wives in this study tend to agree that their own readjustments are thought to be minor in comparison with their children's educational problems. Actually, more than half of the respondents reported that they were generally able to readjust to their old environments and experienced relatively few difficult readjustment situations. However, this is not to say that the readjustments were smooth and easy. Some wives had suffered internally, and experienced considerable struggles and frustrations during their re-entry transitions. In particular, they were troubled by their relationships with old friends, relatives and other mothers in local communities, none of whom had lived overseas.

Most of the respondents interviewed said that, after returning, they felt alienated in their native culture—they found difficulty in interacting with other mothers whom they had come to know through their children's friends or at schools, but who were already part of established social groups. Although the degree varied, most wives also mentioned their uneasiness in relating to their old peer groups. Some said they were not able to find the right tone with their old peers. As a result of being away from their native culture, the returnees lost the support of long-term

and familiar relationships with friends, which had developed before their departures. Others reported that they felt 'burdened' or 'annoyed' in their relationships with relatives, especially in-laws. Possibly the most difficult area in their personal readjustment concerned reintegration into their primary relationships. Their reactions to these frustrations were sometimes characterised by emotional depressions.

Today, more and more people react against the principle of Japanese homogeneity. But still, in defining Japanese culture, stereotypes such as 'groupism' or 'collectivism' are used (e.g., Iwabuchi, 2000; Manabe & Befu, 1984; Mouer & Sugimoto, 1986). The concept of groupism remains fundamental and still pervasive in Japanese culture. Befu (1979), in his study of "*The Effect of Cultural Factors in Readjustment of Returnee Children*", suggested that the environment to which the children returned had a marked impact on their readjustment experiences, as there seemed to be no obvious readjustment problem among returnee children in America (those who returned to America from abroad). What he meant by the "environment" here is the Japanese socio-cultural environment characterised by homogeneity and conformity, in contrast with that in the U.S.A., which can be generally characterised by cultural heterogeneity.

White (1988) examined the Japanese group memberships in terms of 'contact,' 'commonality,' and 'relationship.' According to White (1988:105), the Japanese group memberships are given by active presence, participation in the group and the expression of common beliefs. Members are supposed to be constantly attentive to relationships with the others in the group (p.106), which creates a

pressure to conform to the prescribed behavioural and cultural norms. Thus the criteria for belonging to the group depend on constant interaction, being 'in' the relationship and conforming to prescribed traits, i.e., commonality. The amount of time and commitment to the group guarantees their membership of it (p.112). If the person is not there, not being able to define his/her membership through active presence, he/she might be considered as a member of some other group.

In Japanese social relationships, it is important to define suitable forms of behaviour for interacting with others, to know how to behave appropriately, to define the situation correctly, and in particular to know whom the other is and where he/she belongs (Lebra, 1976:22-25). It is especially crucial to specify one's position, whether one belongs inside, holding a primary place of affiliation (*uchi*) or outside (*soto*). The idea of *uchi* and *soto* refers to the 'inside' people and 'outside' people. The word *uchi* is also used to describe the place one belongs to, such as *my* school or *our* company, whilst *soto* suggests 'another place' or 'another person'. The Japanese generally believe that relatives and acquaintances are inside their group and people whom they do not know are outside.

Very often, it is difficult for newcomers to become a member of a group because they are considered as outside people. When Japanese people leave Japan, their membership is suspended (White, 1988:106). The reported feelings of out-of-placeness among several returnee wives when they interacted with their old peers partly stem from their absence and consequent lack of interaction with other group members and from the socio-cultural value of groupism. It is understandable why returnee wives suffer from a sense of not belonging when we

consider the nature of Japanese group membership.

Several returnee wives actually reported that establishing new friendships was not an easy task in a small tight community. For example, Mrs. N2 (PI3) expressed her first reaction in relating to local mothers, as, "It's hard to get into the tight cliques that have been formed by people who have been together all their lives". Mrs. M1 (MI19) was another wife who reported her isolation from other mothers in her community. She admitted that she had failed in the 'Koen (park)-debut' and she could not make friends with any other local mothers. She thought that her failure in the park-debut was partly due to the exclusive nature of the group formed by local mothers who are not open to outsiders. Another wife (Mrs. O1, PI8) also reported that her re-entry problem was related to the development of new friendships with other mothers in the area. She said, "To my surprise, it was difficult to make new friends. I was a bit depressed because of the fact that it was difficult to make friends within my own country...". Joining the circle was difficult for her as most local mothers had spent their whole life in that area.

The small, fixed community of mothering networks in the local community or PTA circles at their children's school are both distinct and socially homogeneous. Japanese mothers with small children who meet in a neighbourhood playground or park cannot give long hours to the group and they may not have a specific goal (White, 1988:112). Mostly the mothers get together for mutual support and exchange of child raising information or just for the pleasure of being together. They sometimes watch over each other's children. But the group provides enough

benefits if they turn up regularly, and it may even become an informal or formal playground group in the neighbourhood. As can be seen amongst overseas Japanese women's networks, the group has a seniority system, e.g., those with longevity status may exercise their power over the other members.

It should be noted that in Japan, the informal groups, such as local mothers' playground circles or college sports clubs, have a seniority system. When they go overseas, sojourners lose not only their group memberships, but also their sense of seniority. When they return, as well as needing to re-establish themselves into new groups, they will also be the newest member of the group, and therefore the most "junior" member. They might feel uncertain of the way to behave towards the group. Before they left, they may have had a higher ranking within their social groups, but even if they return to the same groups, their absence will have given them the lower ranking of a newcomer.

Newcomers to the group are supposed to be aware of the group's specific norms and rules for expected behaviour. But the returnee wives who may have been unsure had no idea of how they were expected to behave as an *uchi* member experienced alienated feelings in what should have been familiar environments. Their remarks illustrated some of the issues regarding the distinction between ingroup and outgroup consciousness among Japanese people. Mrs. Y (MI16) mentioned that she became aware of the importance of *uchi* membership and the ingroup and outgroup distinction when she interacted with local mothers. Mrs. Y had then consciously made an effort to be part of the group, and the other members finally came to accept her as not so different and given her 'membership'

of the group (See section 5.4.1).

The overseas company-wives were free from the Japanese social bonding or reciprocity and from the social constraints of the traditional ingroup/outgroup distinction. Upon re-entry, they recognised the patterns of Japanese human relationships, the characteristics of Japanese group conformity, which reinforce the differentiation between those inside and outside their group and maintain a distance between themselves and those people outside the group. When individuals with different attributes become members of a group, the group will exert pressure on them to conform to its orientation. And if they do not conform, they will end up in a situation of exclusion or voluntary isolation (See section 5.4 Coping Strategies). Insider status will develop when the individual cleanses away his/her contact with the outside world. The results of the thirty-five interviews suggested that the human relationships specific to the Japanese culture, i.e., ingroup/outgroup distinction, seem to put pressure on returnee wives when they reintegrated into their primarily relationships.

5.2 The Issues of Purity

In Japan, people are supposed to take their shoes off before coming into the home or 'inside', because dirt should not be brought into the pure inside place. It is considered that inside, called *uchi,* is pure, and outside, called *soto,* is dirty. Inside should be kept pure all the time and dirtiness should not be brought from outside according to the idea of *uchi* and *soto.* Japanese culture additionally considers that inside is secure for a member of the *uchi* group whilst outside is dangerous.

In her book *'Purity and Danger'*, Douglas (2000) explained that humans perceiving the world create systems in which they locate ideas and materials. According to Douglas (2000), systematic ordering and classification involve the rejection of inappropriate elements, which can be defined as "matter-out-of place" (pp.36-37). She terms these elements as 'dirt' since we often label them as "dirty", "impure," or "polluting". In other words, she shows how human societies place and perceive the marginality (which falls near the borderlines of threshold) in their normal classification systems, as being either anomalous (being a member of a category that belongs elsewhere) or ambiguous (where belonging anywhere is uncertain, weak and confused) (pp.36-41). Douglas's (2000) work on the power and dangers of boundaries and margins is thought to reflect Japanese ideas of group distinction and maintenance of internal peace and order.

The outcome from the social and cultural homogeneity is a rigid value system, where the sameness often dominates everything else, leaving little room to accept people and/or their ideas which may be intrinsically different and thus dangerous. White (1988:108) suggests that members of groups defined by commonality are potentially more defensive. By 'defensive', she means that groups defined by commonality tend to be more protective against 'different', 'anomalous', or 'ambiguous' outsiders because they are afraid that their maintained values and beliefs will be disrupted or threatened.

Once the Japanese are contaminated by the outside world, have acquired some of its values, and have lost some of their Japanese values, they are marked as 'different' and often regarded as having acquired some 'foreign ways' or different

knowledge from 'pure' Japanese people (White, 1988:13). Exposure to alternative lifestyles threatens the maintenance of security and harmony of the social system at home. The more they have extensive foreign contact, the more they are regarded as potentially polluting in Japanese society. Their 'foreignness' seems to stand in the way when they reintegrate into their old social networks.

In the interviews, some returnee wives mentioned awkward situations in relating to their old peers. Those returnee wives who reported a value change as a result of living abroad have found themselves capable of making decisions and expressing opinions that set them apart in peer groups where everyone else seemed to have uniform values. Those with overseas experience, especially having resided in Western countries, might wish to emphasise the value of individuality and feel frustrated at not being able to state their feelings directly. Assimilation pressure is very strong in Japan and in fact there is little acceptance of individualism or tolerance for different points of view.

Many wives agreed that Japanese people in general would call you 'bossy' and get angry with you when you are too straightforward. Therefore they have found that they always have to express themselves in a very careful way. Some returnee wives had struggled with negative evaluations among their groups. They were afraid of becoming too 'internationalised'. This awareness is typically illustrated by the remarks made by Mrs. T6 (MI29) as follows:

> I sometimes found myself as reacting, not like a Japanese woman, but more like an American woman would in the same situations...I expressed my opinion

straightforwardly to people which made them a bit uneasy...You know, some Japanese people are very timid towards someone who is outspoken or straightforward...

(Mrs. T6, MI29)

Mrs. K2 (PI10), Mrs. M2 (MI33) and Mrs. T7 (MI34) were the cases in point and they were locally ostracised, excluded or voluntarily separated from social groups. For example, Mrs. K2's (PI10) remarks about PTA circles at her child's school [Chapter 4, section 4.3.3-6)] clearly reflected her changed values and self-awareness: her greater objectivity and flexibility in thinking and her willingness to take the initiative in interpersonal relationships. She criticised the compulsory nature of Japanese PTA participation. She related an interesting account, which described the discrepancies between the two cultures in regard to how much or how far an individual should go in expressing one's opinion. Her 'too Westernised' behaviour and attitudes picked up in the States might offend other native mothers. Her individualistic manner, which is regarded as 'an anomaly', may disrupt the group norms and patterns, and is labelled 'arrogance'. The unspoken sentiment that too much 'foreignness' will change the presumed purity is a strong one.

5.3 Marginality and Boundaries

As White (1988:105-109) suggests, when Japanese people leave their home country, stay abroad and return home, they seem to cross not only borders in geographical terms but also socio-cultural boundaries. Socio-cultural boundaries in Japanese

society are based on a fundamental concern with interpersonal relationships and interactions. The rigid maintenance of boundaries is important as it defines their group memberships. Japanese boundaries are laid down strictly (p.106).

Japanese people who have lived outside Japan are often thought to hold a marginal position in society. The concept of marginality was first introduced by Park (1928), in his "*Human Migration and the Marginal Man*" [although Park himself refers back to Simmel on '*The Stranger*' (1917)]. He defined the term 'marginal man' as one who is on the boundary between two societies or cultures, not fully belonging to, participating in or assimilating into either of them, because of racial prejudice and his status as a member of a minority group. The marginal man can be described as a person caught between two cultural systems, not belonging to or fully accepted by either group. Marginal people are strangers or foreigners to both of the groups. As a result, even if they wish to identify themselves as a member of either group, their membership will be rejected. A key element of marginality would be some sort of exclusion (Valentine, 1990:36). That might give them a feeling of isolation and loneliness, which in turn would lead them to social maladjustment in either of the groups.

Douglas (2000) also regards marginality as that which somehow falls between the categories, on the borderlines or threshold of the normal classification system. Such marginality may be interpreted as having positive sacred power, or the negative power of pollution (pp.96-98), or indeed both, but in either case is found to be disturbing. As she states, once something is defined as anomalous or ambiguous, the original set of categories attempts to re-order and clean up the "dirt"(36-41).

When a Japanese business person returns to the domestic group in a company after having performed international duties, he/she may find that his/her previous role is no longer available and he/she may be placed in a post with few or no real tasks, until an appropriate position becomes available. Such people might be separated to ensure the maintenance of 'pure' organisational norms as they are often seen as 'too Westernised' or 'too foreign'. The same situation can happen to returnee students, as the general education system in Japan puts pressure on them to reintegrate into the mainstream system to avoid heterogeneous disorder. They are likely to be placed in readjustment classes, returnee schools, or international schools that separate them from their domestic peers. Returnee wives may experience similar pressures from their local communities and their peer circles and relatives although their roles are less institutionalised. As reported in the interviews, their behaviour was closely watched and they had problems in reintegrating into social groups and maintaining relationships with old friends. Some returnee wives are not interested in the tight-knit groups of the local mothers and they associate mostly with other returnee wives and with foreigners.

Returnees may not be totally excluded from the *uchi* group, though they may nonetheless find themselves isolated within the group as marginal members. Returnees on the borderline are "subject to doubts about the possibility of truly or fully belonging" (Valentine, 1990:39) to the *uchi* group. Those who find that the Japanese group is a demanding environment with a strong distinction between inside and outside tend to see themselves as an outsider and develop conscious efforts to deal with their marginality. Given the nature of Japanese socio-cultural

boundaries and group membership, it is understandable that those returnees suffer from a sense of not belonging anywhere. Indeed they are likely to experience the difficulty resulting from their absence and face resistance in their reintegration because of their marginal status and the social boundaries.

However, boundaries, which might hinder their reintegration, can give shape and meaning to a returnee's overseas experience. Many of the returnees feel that they are acting as if they are the same as the other people around them, but they know they are not. Those with overseas experience are aware of the value of their experiences and the different self-perceptions attained abroad. In order for the returnees to perceive themselves as belonging to a social group that can reflect positively on themselves, the boundaries which distinguish them from other groups are necessary. For returnees, without some form of boundary, overseas experiences themselves have no shape, no meaning and no importance. They are viewed as different from mainstream society because of the distinction based on a boundary, but the boundary may also allow them to think of themselves as a member of another outsider group in their own favour. Some returnee wives, like Mrs. K2 (MI10), Mrs. S4 (MI30) and Mrs. M2 (MI33), are aware that the social boundaries serve to strengthen the returnee wives' perceptions of their status and to ascribe importance to their overseas experiences. This is clearly illustrated in Mrs. M2's (MI33) perception as a returnee wife that 'we (returnee wives) have something in common', which consciously differentiates them from the rest of the local mothers.

5.4 Coping Strategies: three "topical, short life histories"

More than half of the returnee wives interviewed in this study reported that they had a relatively smooth transition back home. Perhaps some people, for whatever reason, are especially suited to adapt to anything. Maybe personality factors play an important role. Perhaps it is the way some individuals approach the repatriation in a positive frame of mind. Preparation and planning can certainly help pave the way to reintegration into the old environment.

However, the majority of the respondents in this study, including those with easy transitional experiences, saw themselves as outsiders to a certain degree, and they had developed conscious efforts to deal with their marginality. The severity of the difficulties and the resistance the returnee wives encountered during the re-entry transitions may have varied depending on their personalities, personal goals, plans, and situations. Consequently, they seemed to handle the re-entry stresses and strains with different reintegration strategies.

By looking at the choices and chances described by the informants in this study, three main types of coping strategies were recognised amongst the respondents. The personality types related to these strategies are:

1. Reassimilators: Trying to reassimilate into their group by passing as an insider, by modifying their behaviours and values;
2. Readjustors: Adjusting their cosmopolitan values to a more domestic style whilst taking advantage of their new found foreign skills to make some changes in their lives back in Japan;
3. Disassociators: Accepting outsider (marginal) positions and being voluntarily

isolated from the mainstream group.

In the results section, some generalisations have been offered for the intercultural and readjustment experiences of returnee wives, however, the researcher does not claim universal validity, as the process of intercultural experience is unique for the individual undergoing it. One wife cannot of course be fully representative of all subjects who were included within one type of category. Generalisation to others is possible but there were many variations within the pattern. The three short life histories below represent three types of re-entry. These case stories, one for each re-entry strategy, are presented in the form of a short life history, in order to illustrate these concepts. The descriptions of three returnee wives are drawn from the sample, though the names and a few personal circumstances have been changed to protect their anonymity. The case presentations are mainly edited transcripts of face-to-face in-depth interviews. In them, interpretations are based upon the respondent's own accounts of events and experiences.

5.4.1 Reassimilators

In this study, 'Reassimilators' are those returnee wives who seemed to readapt to their *uchi* environment as an insider relatively smoothly. Thus, most of the returnee wives who reported no or minor readjustment problems fall under the category of 'Reassimilators'. However, it should be noted that most of them in this group admitted that they had to make some conscious effort to reintegrate themselves into *uchi* groups in their native society. If one fears exclusion from the group and tries to avoid being excluded, a common response is a rejection of the

experiences. Those who try to pass themselves off as insiders attempt to erase signs of the overseas experience by covering up noticeably foreign appearance, habits or language. Thus, reassimilators are not easily located through a network of returnees, since they often intentionally avoid associating with other returnees.

The perceived need to cover up their experiences and their uneasiness over the differences can lead to inaction and silence among the group. Most returnee wives in this category are circumspect in their interaction with old peers and they have learned which topics are 'safe' for casual conversation and which are 'dangerous' areas to avoid. Overall, they seemed to think that talking about their overseas experience might sound boastful to those who had never lived outside Japan. They were in agreement that unless they were asked to do so, they would not speak out as it would irritate people around them. This awareness is illustrated by the remarks made by several wives. For example, Mrs. F1 (PI4) mentioned that she hesitated to talk about her overseas experiences. As she consciously avoided talking about her overseas experiences, it was not too hard to fit herself back into her old environment after having lived abroad:

> Some friends were not interested, and had little knowledge about overseas lives...If I were to say nothing but good things about the U.S. all the time, it would probably sound like I just want them to envy me...I found myself in a sort of strange position...Despite all that though, I thought I would be able to go back (to my old circle) and live perfectly well in Japan. I thought in a couple of years, I would be just like one of them, and now I am...
>
> (Mrs. F1, PI4)

A returnee wife in the reassimilator group will often try to make herself look like other Japanese mothers by modifying her behaviour and values. She may feel that her smooth reintegration depends on being 'as Japanese as possible', although she is all too aware that she is already marked as different. A returnee wife's perceived differentness, i.e., impurity, leads to her isolation from other mothers in the community. Her sense of belongingness is sustained by fitting in with her peers. However, in attempting to reject one's experiences, one pays a "psychological price, including the price of doubts about one's own identity" (Valentine, 1990:4) and the price of having to distance oneself from those who proudly proclaim their overseas experiences. One wife described herself as an adaptive sort of person who can get along well with anyone, saying, "I'm pretty good at adapting to other people's manners...but part of you gets lost when you do that too much. You've got to look at everything with an outsider's point of view."

Case No.1: Mrs. Y (MI16), a passive "Reassimilator"

For the first of three cases, the researcher has chosen one of the "reassimilated" subjects from the respondents. Mrs. Y is typical of the company-wives who have had multiple sojourns overseas. She has returned twice after accompanying her husband who works at the overseas department in the banking industry. She is forty years old and a housewife with two sons who are twelve and nine. The first sojourn occurred before their first child was born, her husband was sent to the U.S.A. to earn an MBA degree at Cornell University. Mrs. Y accompanied him in the U.S.A. and stayed for two years. During her stay in the U.S.A., she attended the same university as an auditor and took English classes along with several

other subjects there. In 1987, they returned to Japan and then stayed in Tokyo for six years. The second time away was to Singapore in 1993 when her elder son was four years old and their younger one was just over one. The family lived there for five years.

There were other Japanese employees in the Singapore office and they were part of a large Japanese community in the country. She reported that she did not have cultural problems, complaining only about the weather, which is extremely hot and humid throughout the year. As far as her English language was concerned, she managed well. Although she had some problems understanding Singaporean English, she said, "I felt no great difficulty." Yet she made no strong attempts to meet local people by joining local activities. Instead, Mrs. Y belonged to a group of Japanese women who took hobby classes together, toured sightseeing spots and went shopping.

In 1998, they returned to Japan and since then they have been living in the company's housing at Suginami ward in Tokyo, which was different from where they had lived before their departure to Singapore. At the time of re-entry, the older child was nine and the younger was six years old. As the couple were worried about their sons, whom they felt might have problems in adapting to Japanese schools, they put their children in a returnee class at a private school in Tokyo. She says she is quite relieved, as the children have shown no signs of readjustment problems, such as psychosomatic symptoms or refusal to do schoolwork or speak Japanese.

Mrs. Y reports that she did not experience any severe re-entry shock. Her life in Japan is not very different from her life in Singapore. She practices her hobby of flower arranging and sees her friends. She is not especially interested in meeting other returnee mothers except for a few from her sons' returnee school. She is keener on re-establishing relationships with her former Japanese friends. But she knows that she should not speak of her overseas life too often and says her friends would be jealous if she did. She says that even if she does not intend to show off about her experience, they would take it as boastful talk. She often emphasises her difficult experiences in Singapore as she thinks her life there was very different from the ex-patriot life in Western countries. Mrs. Y said:

> At one time, I noticed that one of the other wives, who'd had no overseas experience, had a dull expression on her face. I realised those (my overseas experiences) were topics I should have avoided when I met friends who had lived all their lives in Japan. They were certainly not welcome topics...

By observing her returnee friends and the reactions of the other native mothers, she sensed that positive remarks about her overseas life would be perceived as arrogant and negatively interpreted by the mothers who had spent their whole lives in Japan. She herself admits that she shows an adaptive personality and gets along relatively well with most people in most situations, because she is naturally not inclined to talk about herself. She seems to appreciate all viewpoints, and overtly disagrees with very few. Yet Mrs. Y also consciously makes an effort to be a part of the group, and the other members have now come to regard her as being one of them and have given her "membership" of that group. One mother in the

non-returnee class at her son's school said to her that Mrs. Y was not like other mothers in the returnee class. Mrs. Y asked what she meant by "not like other returnee mothers". She said that they thought returnee mothers seem to say strange things but perceived Mrs. Y as "very Japanese". Mrs. Y reported that she felt that she was accepted as a member and had become a part of them. By modifying her behaviours and values, Mrs. Y tries to make herself look like any other native Japanese mother. Her sense of belongingness is sustained by fitting in with her peers. This is motivated by the desirability of being accepted by peers, anxiety about being left out, and an urge for always being considered as part of the group.

Mrs. Y had been working until she became pregnant with her first child. So it was not the case that she had to give up her career because of her husband's transfer. She said that she did not want to resume her career after returning to Japan. Ever since she returned to Japan, she has not energetically looked for a job outside home, but, because she was looking after her children at home and her age was over 40 on re-entry, she was unable to apply for the jobs she wanted. However, she does not seem to mind about not being able to find employment. Her relatively relaxed attitude about finding a job seems somewhat contradictory to the results from previous studies which suggest that mothers who were not employed after re-entry experienced greater re-entry shock. As Mrs. Y herself pointed out, those who had previous working experience, may have been more career-orientated and wished to continue their careers after re-entry. Looking for a job eagerly and yet not finding employment after re-entry may make them more frustrated. Mrs. Y seems to find satisfaction in her family life and in the accomplishments of her

children, gaining a sense of fulfilment from doing good work as a housewife and a mother.

In addition, what may have made her re-entry transition easier was that her husband, unlike other Japanese husbands, is relatively family orientated. He tries to take days off for family matters, spends as much time as possible with his children and helps out with household chores. She said that it was not something which he learned from living in the U.S.A., but is rather his nature as he was like that before their departure to the U.S.A. His family-orientated attitude did not change after re-entry. Thus, one possible explanation of Mrs. Y's relatively smooth transition after returning to Japan is that she had a lot of co-operation from her husband and they had gone through the readjustment period together.

5.4.2 Readjustors

'Readjustors' in this study are those returnee wives who adjusted self-consciously, actively and willingly to their home environment. It is possible to say that there is a resemblance in behaviour among those classified as adjustors and those classified as assimilators. This appears to be so because, although personal change as a result of living abroad is a positive issue, unlike the disassociators, the wives in these two groups are characteristically centred on a stable mother-wife role and they take their identity for granted unlike those classified as disassociators. Yet those in the readjustor group seem to be more willing to accept their differentness and maintain contact with other returnees and foreigners. And, unlike the disassociators, those in the readjustor group are generally more relaxed in their

approach to the demands of Japanese society and have been more able to come to terms with Japanese socio-cultural values.

When the researcher asked returnee wives in this category, whether they had gone through any difficulties upon re-entry, several of them said they could not think of any. They actually reported that they had made the transition back to Japan relatively easily, but that this did not just happen. It is something they had to work at consciously. For example, Mrs. T4 (MI21) made a remark about her preparation for re-entry.

> Before leaving England, I'd heard a lot about returnee mothers' stories, something like...If you talk about the enjoyable things in the U.K., people around you will be envious of you and interpret your behaviour as bragging. You'll definitely stand out. I heard one of the other company-wives saying, 'After returning to Japan, when you invite your friends to your house, you are not supposed to serve tea in your favourite Wedgwood teacups. It would then probably look like you just wanted them to envy you.' Even at the seminar I attended, I was surprised to hear what they told us...They said that we shouldn't talk about our life in England or we'd be left out or bullied by our old friends.
>
> (Mrs. T4, MI21)

As it was her first re-entry experience, before Mrs. T4 (MI21) returned to Japan, she listened to others who had lived in foreign countries and experienced re-entry. She also attended an orientation class for relocation, which was organised by a

Japanese transfer company. Mrs. T2 (MI13) also reported that she made conscious efforts to make the transition smoothly. She took several steps to reintegrate herself and her daughter into the native environment.

> We immediately looked for a place for our daughter at a local nursery school. We found friends for her and I also found friends through her school. We joined a community swimming pool where my daughter made lots more friends.
>
> (Mrs. T2, MI13)

Returnees tend to view life back in their home culture in comparative terms (Werkman, 1986:15). However, those returnee wives in this group were aware that the comparison would not lead them anywhere. For example, Mrs. H (MI15) decided that she would never compare home with her life in the U.K., and said, "There is no direct comparison. Once you compare, you will certainly be dissatisfied." She remains modest about her overseas experiences and thinks it is better not to talk about them. She knows very well that they can tend to threaten or irritate people. She admits that she has been making serious efforts to reintegrate herself into her old environment.

The degree to which a returnee can consciously modify his/her frame of reference and become aware of his/her own personal and cultural identification may very well be the degree to which the marginal person can truly function successfully on the borderline. Value changes and group identification can result in the formation of in-between attitudes in returnee wives. These seem to be more appropriate for the smooth readjustment of returnees in transitional situations. Seemingly this

kind of coping style of the returnee wives has emerged from their transitional experiences when they were negotiating the tensions and trying to ease the awkwardness of cross cultural re-entry. In the case of Mrs. H (MI15), this has involved devotion to her home environment. For Mrs. T2 (MI3), Mrs. T3 (MI18) and Mrs. T4 (MI21) this has meant actualisation of the new skills which they developed during their sojourn abroad in interacting with other mothers. For Mrs. F1 (PI4), this is through her commitment to provide support for returnee wives who have difficult transitional experiences. Mrs. S1 (MI9) and Mrs. F3 (MI24) were exceptional in terms of working experience abroad, and continued to pursue their career and studies after re-entry. Each of these wives is in some sense an outsider, intentionally or accidentally dislocated from one frame of reference to another; from one environment of experience to a different one. They were definitely aware of their own situations and the inherent risks and dangers

Case No. 2: Mrs. H (MI15), an active "Readjustor"

For the second case history, one of the 'readjustor' subjects from the sample was selected. Mrs. H is in her fifties and has two sons. She had been a nurse for more than twenty-six years. After she graduated from high school, she attended a nursing school in Kyoto for three years, which was attached to Kyoto National Hospital. She met her husband during her high school years and as soon as she graduated they got married. Her husband works for one of the biggest car manufacturing companies in Japan. He had been back and forth between Japan and other countries, on his own, for the previous 26 years. Mrs. H had been kept very busy working hard as a nurse and the mother of two boys. She succeeded in

gaining a BA from K University and was also given a special promotion in her job, jumping six grades.

In 1989, when her husband received his overseas assignment in the U.K., he was a deputy senior manager in the sales planning department. The couple left Japan but the two sons stayed behind. They were already 18 and 16 and had just started at new schools. They stayed with a relative in Tokyo whilst their parents were on their overseas assignment. When the researcher asked how she felt about resigning from her job because of her husband's overseas transfer, she said she thought she had done enough work as a nurse and was willing to accompany him as it would be his last overseas assignment. Although she had an established career, she decided to give it up to accompany him on this occasion. This was probably due to the fact that her children had already grown up and so they could be left in Japan and she was free from worries over their education. But what differentiates her from other returnee wives is that she seemed to have a clearer picture of what she would gain from her overseas experience, a sort of determination and objective. She thought her overseas experience would definitely offer her a new opportunity.

For the first five years in the U.K., they lived in a suburb of Guildford, in a small village called Beansfield. She was able to work as a volunteer nurse at a local clinic in the village whilst attending R University majoring in Sociology. Before she left Japan, she had been an undergraduate student on a correspondence course at K University. Her supervisor had suggested that she continue her studies somehow in the U.K. But having been a correspondence student, it was difficult for her to

get a place as a graduate student in the U.K. However, she finally had got accepted by R University to pursue her studies. She continued to study there and finally got her Master's degree in Sociology shortly before they left the U.K.

During the first few years in the small rural village, where there were few East Asians, she had encountered what she called "not discrimination but a kind of hatred towards the Japanese". She worked very hard as a volunteer nurse and gradually she came to feel accepted as a part of the local community. But she found that this acceptance was not true after one incident. The couple felt that they were staying in the wrong place and so decided to leave the village. They moved to Maidenhead, Berkshire, where they stayed for three and a half years. There was a big Japanese community there although she said that she got involved in it as little as possible. As Japanese companies provided accommodation in close proximity to other Japanese families, this meant that, although they had not deliberately intended it, the Japanese families end up living in a Japanese ex-patriot community. However, Mrs. H was able to avoid a typical Japanese ex-pats life and constantly made energetic attempts to meet local people through her volunteer activities. She also actively pursued her hobby and obtained a qualification as an instructor of China painting.

After returning to Japan, she did not intend to make use of her specific skill as a nurse and she did not wish to go back to hospital life, where one had to rush around all the time. She had no longing to get back to the 'stimulating world of work', nor to take paid employment in any way. She rather wanted to do some sort of voluntary work and decided to take a position as the chairwoman of the

Japanese branch of the China Painting Society, which requires her to communicate with people from abroad and to travel around the world.

The general impression gained from the interviews with those classified as readjustors was that, although they tried to utilise skills gained during their overseas sojourns and actively pursued a series of changes that have carried them into a new niche after re-entry, their lives are dominated by their roles as a mother and a wife. This is also true for Mrs. H despite the fact that she had been devoting herself to her profession as a nurse before she left Japan. She refers to herself as a 'home-maker' with a pride and satisfaction utterly in contrast with the fact that she previously had a well developed career outside home and was highly independent in nature.

Mrs. H was exceptional in her ability to be objective about herself and her position in relation to others. She had a clear idea of what sort of person she was. Mrs. H, who was very conscious of her role as a company-wife, was eager to talk about how she had spent her years in the U.K. Her conversation was both lively and considered. Mrs. H analysed her characteristics as natural and said that they would never change, no matter where she lives, but she readily admitted that her experience in the U.K. for eight years was the most enriching of her life. She emphasised that what she had gained from her overseas experience was the chance to see things from a different perspective and a greater confidence in her English language ability. Mrs. H also remarked several times that her sojourn in the U.K. made her better able to cope with different people. But at the same time, she stated that she had "not changed in any fundamental way". She is a

hard-working woman, a woman of high moral standards, highly self-motivated and benevolent. This was evident in her characterisation of herself when she said that what she wants most out life is to understand other people and to be able to help them as much as possible. She has always tried to spend her time helping others, in an effort to follow this ideal.

Mrs. H reported that she made the transition back to Japan easily and did not experience any sort of reverse culture shock. She felt very content in returning to her own country and speaking her own language. She admitted that she felt really at home and suggested that because of her chance to live in a foreign country, she had begun to feel even more Japanese. The reason why she did not have a difficult transition back home is clearly due to her personality and her unusual involvement in her education and occupation. But this did not just happen by chance. Although returnees tend to view life back in their home culture in comparative terms, Mrs. H decided that she would never compare her Japanese life with her life in the U.K. She remains modest about her overseas experiences and feels that what she gained from her experience abroad will continue to enrich her, but she is well aware that other people may feel threatened or irritated by it. She admits that she has been making a conscious effort to reintegrate herself into her old environment and she realised that she would not be accepted in her home environment if the native people perceived her as being different to them. She also mentioned other returnee wives among her painting circle who tend to refer too much to their foreign experiences. She explained:

I'm a sort of perfectionist, I mean, once I know what I want to do whatever it is

> I'll concentrate and work really hard to accomplish the goal. I give as much effort as I possibly can. Though I say it myself, I'm very confident in this sense. I suppose those who boast about their overseas experiences by just telling others might not feel very confident about themselves. They just sound to me as though they are not working very hard. When you make a sincere effort and have to go through many hardships to finally accomplish your goals, you cannot easily express it in words...You just cannot simply say, 'This is what I've done'...

Mrs. H feels that it is best for the returnees to attempt a serious readjustment, a coming to terms with their own culture, but one which is conducted with full self-awareness. She stated that many of the returnee wives should consciously hide "foreign behaviour", which would do them no good socially. She refers several times in the interview to her new sense of appreciation of Japanese culture, which began while she was in the U.K., but has gained a renewed emphasis during the months following her return. She reaffirmed her impression of Japanese society and its culture as being just as "good" as the Western variety.

5.4.3 Disassociators

A relatively direct means of reducing the dissonance developed by transitional circumstances is by disassociation. This is to avoid engaging in role behaviour which would be inconsistent with one's values, by withdrawing from his/her status in the home environment. 'Disassociators' in this study are those who feel themselves to be strangers in Japan and in their social relationships.

Almost all the disassociators reported that they had been irritated by the requirements of the Japanese ideas of group norms. Most of them also showed annoyance with the traditional Japanese extended family system and its complex network of obligations. They may have found, upon return, that they were annoyed with the rigidity and formality of many aspects of Japanese social life, of which they had been unconscious before their departure. Or, in some instances, they may have discovered changes in themselves by observing the reactions of others towards their behaviour. As a result, they are the ones who are most likely to experience readjustment problems upon re-entry.

Disassociators were aware of, and reported in considerable detail on, differences between the social relational patterns in the host country and those in Japan. Also differences in wider issues such as politics, social problem resolution and education systems, and they were able to find companions with similar views, generally other returnees. Disassociators are more keen to meet other returnees, will seek them out as friends and will try to keep in touch with them. They identified social support from returnee friends as very important for their readjustment to Japan. The returnee wives usually find that they can fit in with greater ease and comfort among those who have previous overseas experiences. The following are typical comments:

> I had a really difficult time after returning, and mentioned about it to one friend. She just said, "Your problem is a trivial matter, not serious enough to worry about." It really makes me feel down to be told like that...I think only those who've been abroad can share this feeling...

(Mrs K3, MI14)

> Luckily, when I moved into a company-provided house in Tokyo after returning, I happened to have a friend nearby, who had returned from Singapore...She is a good companion. I'm really at ease being with her...
>
> (Mrs. Y, MI16)

> I feel at ease with the mothers from the returnee class. We can share common experiences, difficulties and worries. We are tuned in to each other...
>
> (Mrs. F2, MI17)

In most cases, the generally positive perception exhibited by wives whose readjustment process culminated relatively well was due to their sharing common values leading to increased positive sentiments and to more frequent interaction with other returnee wives. Those wives who had returnee friends may have had an easier transitional period because they had a place where they could share their overseas experiences and talk about their problems—a place where they could establish their own social-psychological supports. These friendships provided support for them so that they could feel comfortable and talk to someone with whom they could be open. A place which provided for them a comfort and an outlet for their frustration.

In the literature dealing with migration and acculturative stress, social support is often seen as an important intervening variable. Looking into different social support variables, Berry (1997) found that social support could help reduce the

acculturative stress experienced by immigrants. Support groups, either friends or volunteer networks, may serve to reduce stress and undesirable emotional reactions and at the same time stimulate positive behavioural responses.

The disassociator's social approach may be characterised by other Japanese mothers in such terms as "not a polite type of Japanese", and "too straightforward". To most Westerners, they would probably have given the impression of an outgoing and confident person. Most of those who fell into the category of disassociator had considerable intercultural experiences before their sojourns. One might hypothesise that many of those included in the disassociator category could see the sojourn as an opportunity to indulge in behaviour patterns and freedom of expression which had to be avoided or restricted in the Japanese social environment. The sojourn abroad could generate some feelings of release from routine habits and social restrictions; in fact, for some wives, the sojourn could be seen as a chance to "be one's self."

In the interviews, the researcher found that some separated returnee wives saw themselves as not totally Japanese, but in some way foreign. As can be seen in the cases of Mrs. N2 (PI3), Mrs. K2 (PI10), Mrs. O1 (PI8) and Mrs. M2 (MI33), prior overseas experiences may have influenced the attitudes of those who accept marginality. These wives had a considerable amount of foreign contact before their most recent sojourn. Unlike some reassimilators studied, disassociators are able to associate successfully and intimately with the host society during their sojourn. These experiences made them more self-reliant and less tied to the roles and traditions of Japanese group culture. Typical comments from disassociated wives

were:

> The thing is I just didn't want to be annoyed or bothered to deal with the reactions of others...I got really stressed out by people saying things like, "Oh, you had a really good time in England. You've changed so much. You are so Westernised...that I didn't want to answer. I was coming to that stage where I wasn't enjoying their company anymore and I thought I was getting right out of that group... I just didn't love being part of it any more...
>
> (Mrs. O1, PI8)

> My old friends seemed not to be too clear on where I had been or what I did there or why it was important. They didn't appear to be very interested in the rest of the world...I felt I was in a void and couldn't relate to the day to day matters of my friends. I couldn't get excited about the things that stirred them...such as the latest fashions and hairstyles, TV programmes, magazines, Juku (cram schools) and Juken (preparation and/or the examinations for prestigious schools). I began to keep quiet among them and avoid talking about my overseas life. I tried to see those friends who had previous overseas experiences instead... I tried to find other returnee mothers or contact those friends when I had time. Tried more actively to talk with them. I've got some good friends but they are all returnee mothers, with whom I can share everything.
>
> (Mrs. T6, MI29)

It might be hypothesised that the changes in Japan towards 'internationalisation'—the more tolerant acceptance of individuality, the

broadening effect of the sojourn, and the increasing availability of jobs for returnee wives tends to lead the social behaviour of the more alienated returnee women towards a more active participation in their social and career lives in Japan.

Case No. 3: Mrs. M2 (MI32), a "Disassociator"

The third case history drawn from the returnee wives sample illustrates a pattern within the "disassociator" category. Mrs. M2 is a housewife in her forties who is a mother of two children: a twelve year old boy and a ten year old girl. Her husband, who works for one of the leading banks in Tokyo, received his overseas assignment in 1989. In the summer of 1989, the couple went to Frankfurt, Germany and stayed there for one and a half years. Then they moved to Dusseldorf and lived there for another four and a half years. During that time, both her children were born. Before her husband's first assignment in Germany, she had been studying German as she expected that he would be transferred there in the near future. Although she had some knowledge of the German language, she found it was difficult as what she had learned in the language school was not very practical and she actually had a problem in understanding what the local people said. However, within a year or so she became able to manage the daily necessities. Since there was a big Japanese community in Dusseldorf, so she did not feel any inconvenience in living there or experience homesickness in living there. Raising small children in a foreign country was not at all difficult for her. She said:

> I managed it (having young children in an unfamiliar environment) easily. I thought it would not be so different from what I would have experienced if I'd

> stayed in Japan. Of course you can rely on some support from your extended family and friends when you're in Japan, but I think that the Japanese society and people, are not so caring for mothers with little children. They just don't care even if you're pushing a buggy and struggling with heavy stuff...

In 1994, they returned to Japan. After three years, her husband received another foreign posting in London. She was willing to accompany him, as she had always wanted to go to that country and she had thought she would definitely go some day and live there. They moved to London with their seven-year-old son and four-year-old daughter. The family stayed there for four years. During her stay in London, Mrs. M2 was involved in various local community activities, such as playing a role as a PTA committee member at her daughter's school. She said she had to go to school everyday throughout the year to organise various activities and events. She interacted closely with local people. Her daughter made a smooth adjustment in the local elementary school. Again, Mrs. M2 did not experience any difficulties in adjusting to the foreign environment. She considers that she had a somewhat Westernised way of thinking. She described herself as "having a Western mentality" and her attitudes showed an individualistic manner which sometimes did not fit in with the Japanese value system. For instance, it is rather unusual for Japanese overseas mothers to participate in the PTA at a local school. The respondents for the most part stressed the difficulties of interacting effectively with the local mothers, let alone taking a turn as a PTA officer. Her involvement in the PTA reflects her positive attitude towards her foreign experience and her individualistic nature, which can be seen in some of her comments.

> Most (of the Japanese mothers overseas) consider that they have to do something for their children's school. But when it comes to helping on a PTA, they are rather reluctant because of the language difficulties and actually they think it is just too difficult... I'm not fluent but I always think it's not just the language. You don't need to be fluent to get involved in some way. I was told by some (Japanese) mothers that they were glad as they had been spared the burden of participating because I had taken my turn as a committee member.

Mrs. M2 said she was not very confident in her English ability. But she said that what was important for blending into the host culture and society was not simply the language ability, but the willingness to interact with local people.

In the summer of 2001, the family returned to Japan. They have been living in a flat in Machida City in Tokyo, within walking distance of her daughter's international school. She put her daughter into an international school in Tokyo. She said that she had realised differences in social relational patterns and educational environments between Western countries and Japan. In her view, the Western educational system was an adequate model and she perceived it as providing greater flexibility and creativity for the children. She also wanted her daughter to retain her English ability. It is often said that it is quite difficult for children to retain their foreign language ability once they come back to the home culture and associate with their native friends. On the other hand, she put her son into the local Junior high school as he used to attend the Japanese school in London. He did not have any problems particular to returnee children and made a relatively smooth re-entry.

What Mrs. M2 felt after returning to Japan, which was common to both of her re-entry experiences, was that she noticed something about the human relationships especially in relating to other people, which she had never realised before her departure. She says that she often feels a sort of oppressive feeling and just cannot stand the stifling atmosphere. She also commented on the indecisiveness of Japanese people.

> They just can't decide things on their own. I think it's a general tendency in this country even including politics. The Japanese government wouldn't do anything unless they were told to do so by the U.S. After all, the Japanese wouldn't decide, think or behave by themselves; they tend to pass the buck.

Most of those whom Mrs. M2 is in close contact with are other returnee mothers. She seems to enjoy their company. She says she feels at ease when they meet and talk about various things. There was a common sense of positive identification through their overseas lives, what they had been through and had done. When the family returned from Germany, after their first sojourn, they moved to a small community in Saitama prefecture where there were not so many returnee families. She was viewed by local people with curiosity. She described other mothers at her son's nursery school as "overwhelmingly domestic". When she received some unpleasant remarks from one of the other mothers she thought that the mother just envied her. She said, "Once, a mother said, 'I wish I could go...' and I thought, 'Then why don't you just go if you want to...'".

Mrs. M2 made some interesting remarks when she talked about her returnee

mothers' network. She was wondering if it was the right thing to say, but she described her returnee friends as 'reaching a certain level', by which she meant that they had a similar background.

> I've recently come to realise that people tend to associate with those who have a similar background. They have something in common through their school years, through their work experience or their living environment. I don't think the Japanese society is a hierarchical one though, to a certain degree, hierarchical systems exist...I'm not saying which group (those who had overseas experience or those who never lived outside Japan) is good or not, or which one is better or worse...But actually, when you associate with someone with the same background as you have, you definitely feel more comfortable. As a result, you tend to stick together. You will go on to live similar lifestyles, and your children will be placed in a similar environment. Then when you look around, you have friends who are like you, even though you hadn't consciously tried to select them as your friends...

From the interviews, the researcher found that there were different levels of marginality. From Mrs. M2's perspective, her marginality cannot be resolved with conscious effort. Her returnee friends and she will be unable to mingle with those who have a different background. There can be seen a strong sense of union and a sense of conformity among those returnee wives themselves, which differentiate them from other local mothers.

In summary, the returnee wives in this study revealed that their readaptation

process involved certain degrees of struggle and frustration. In particular, they were troubled by what they considered to be the tightness of human relationships specific to the Japanese culture. The returnee wives' own readjustment, as far as it is possible to separate it from that of their families, seems to depend on their feelings of embeddedness in a community of friends and relatives (White, 1988:42) and their approach in coping with marginality. Most of the informants displayed similar emotional reactions when they reintegrated into their primary relationships although the intensity of such emotional experiences was different. They differed in their behavioural reactions and the coping strategies used to deal with their marginal status. The 'readjustors' were more positive and active in coping with their transitional difficulties, whilst the 'reassimilators' were more passive and the 'disassociators' were more withdrawn. Overall, social support from returnee friends may serve to reduce stress and undesirable emotional reactions and at the same time stimulate positive behavioural responses.

5.5 Returnee Women and Work

5.5.1 Problems in starting/restarting their own careers

Overseas assignments may present wives with special challenges, affecting their self-image, self-esteem and confidence. For those who were working outside home before their departure, the significant change in role, from financially independent 'career woman' to supportive 'at-home' expatriate spouse responsible for corporate entertaining, can be a very stressful transition. In the overseas transfer, whilst the husband's identity is usually enhanced through the sense of accomplishment as a

successful executive, the wife's is often shredded because of her inability to transfer her previously developed skills, talents and interests (Seidenberg, 1973:1-10). For most company-wives, their personal identities remain secondary to those of their husbands and as Andersen (1979:142) says, their own careers and educations are frequently interrupted or even terminated. The circumstances can be exacerbated, particularly if they have given up a job or career that was important to them.

Table 5.5.1 shows the reasons why the returnee wives had to give up their previous work. It also summarises the job status of the respondents, before the departure, at present and planned for the future and presents the relationship between their job status and their readjustment difficulties. As can be seen in Table 5.5.1, amongst the fifteen wives, whose jobs or careers were interrupted because of their husbands' overseas transfers, six wives reported that they had gone through severe readjustment. Those who had to give up work to travel with their husbands may have suffered more difficulties with respect to not working upon return. For example, Mrs. N2 (PI3) described her feeling about giving up her work when her husband had got a job offer in Madagascar and then in France as follows:

> At first, he was offered a job in Madagascar, neither of us wanted to move...Obviously, I wouldn't have been able to get a job there...but if we were forced to choose between a job for my husband or for me, he would always have to come first....Wherever a wife goes she's looked upon primarily as a mother...'
>
> (Mrs. N2, PI3)

Table 5.5.1 Job Status of the Respondents and Readjustment Problems

Interview No.	Respondent	Never Worked	Gave up work at marriage or birth of a child	Gave up work to accompany my husband's overseas assignment	Current job status N=Not working P=Part-time F=Full-time T=Training V=Voluntary work	Future plan N=Has no plan P=Plans to take a part-time job F=Plans to take a full-time job T=Plans for further training towards a job V=Has plans for voluntary work	Readjustment problems N= No M=Minor S=Severe
PI1	Mrs. N1		○		V	V	M
PI2	Mrs. T1		○		V	V	M
PI3	Mrs. N2			○	V	V	S
PI4	Mrs. F1		○		V	V	M
PI5	Mrs. N3			○	F	F	M
PI6	Mrs. U1	○			N	N	M
PI7	Mrs. K1		○		N	T	M
PI8	Mrs. O1		○		V	P	M
PI9	Mrs. S1		○		P	F	M
PI10	Mrs. K2		○		P	F	M
PI11	Mrs. W			○	N	P	M
PI12	Mrs. S2	○			N	N	M
MI13	Mrs. T2			○	P	P	M
MI14	Mrs. K3			○	N	P	S
MI15	Mrs. H			○	V	V	N
MI16	Mrs. Y		○		N	N	M
MI17	Mrs. F2			○	F	F	S
MI18	Mrs. T3			○	P	P	M
MI19	Mrs. M1			○	N	N	M
MI20	Mrs. S3	○			N	N	N
MI21	Mrs. T4		○		P	P	M
MI22	Mrs. K4			○	N	N	N
MI23	Mrs. O2		○		N	P	S
MI24	Mrs. F3			○	T	F	M
MI25	Mrs. T5		○		N	P	S
MI26	Mrs. O3		○		N	P	M
MI27	Mrs. K5			○	P	P	S
MI28	Mrs. K6	○			N	N	M
MI29	Mrs. T6			○	P	T	M
MI30	Mrs. S4			○	P	F	S
MI31	Mrs. U2		○		N	N	M
MI32	Mrs. A		○		N	N	M
MI33	Mrs. M2		○		N	P	M
MI34	Mrs. T7			○	P	F	S
MI35	Mrs. O4		○		N	N	M
	Total	4	16	15			35

*No wives continued their careers uninterrupted through their overseas experience.

In general, she said she thought the husband's career is the most important.

I know a family which was broken up because the wife didn't follow her husband when he moved to where he could get a job. That was the case with my friend.

> They don't live together any more because my friend's husband worked for a long time in places as far away as Finland. He lived alone, without his family, and then, of course, it was only natural that things turned out the way they did. For that reason, I think a wife ought to go where her husband goes...I started to think along those lines when I was told that my husband would be transferred overseas. I tried to manage our home so that he could concentrate more on his work.
>
> (Mrs.N2, PI3)

Mrs. N2 (PI3) went on to say that there was a problem of jealousy when her husband had a successful career and she did not.

> Perhaps I did feel a bit envious. But I was gradually getting irritated with things the way they were; he was doing something interesting and I was not... It's the fact that I'm the wife of an overseas employee that gets in my way. Of course company-wives are usually not expected to work...He could do anything he wished—literally anything. He had a good reputation in his job. He handles people well—while I didn't seem to have succeeded in anything...
>
> (Mrs.N2, PI3)

After re-entering the old environment, returnee wives face problems in starting or restarting their own careers. Mrs. F2's (MI17) case illustrates the difficulty of job searching after re-entry. Before her first departure to the U.S.A, she had been working for a publishing company as a freelance writer. She used to write articles for a women's magazine. She considered her husband's overseas assignment as a

positive change for her as well. She thought this would give her a different perspective that would be useful for her writing career, and she resigned her position to accompany him. Although her career was disrupted while she lived in the U.S.A., she made a conscious effort to write reports for the magazine intending to go back to work soon after returning to Japan. After returning to Japan however, it took her about a year to get back to her previous position because of her absence for one and a half years. She said, "If you leave for one year, it will take more than one year to go back to the previous state and catch up with everything around you". She also described her situation when she tried to get the same job in the same publishing company as follows:

> It didn't go well...It was the time when the recession had just started, and what was worse was that the magazine, which I used to write for, had been discontinued. I wasn't able to find a proper job for quite a long time...If you have been absent for more than a year, it will be extremely difficult to catch up with what's going on...
>
> (Mrs. F2, MI17)

Her readjustment in terms of restarting her own career was a lot more difficult than she had expected. Mrs. F2 (MI17) felt frustrated for not being able to find what she thought she wanted to do due to her absence and her age. She also described how she felt when she had to depend on her husband financially:

> The thing is that I didn't mind so much about discontinuing my writing career itself, as I thought it would be a good opportunity to see a different world, but

what annoyed me was that I didn't like losing the means of earning money by myself, I mean, I'd lost financial independence. I felt that I would end up depending on my husband too much...

(Mrs. F2, MI17)

Mrs. F3 (MI24) is another wife, who had to give up her career as an assistant researcher at a medical college in Tokyo because of her husband's overseas transfer. She described how she felt when she returned home and restarted her career as follows:

I wouldn't have given up my job if there hadn't been my husband's overseas transfer. I'd been working ever since I'd graduated from university. Now I've got a three-year gap in my career, I'm not sure if I could go back to my previous work having that blank period. I wasn't confident in my ability to catch up with everything at work...And I thought I'd have to have something more in order to stay at the work for a long-term period.

(Mrs. F3, MI24)

After returning to Japan, Mrs. F3 (MI24) decided to go to graduate school in Tokyo to get an MBA degree specialising in management of health related facilities, such as hospitals and day care centres, which was related to her previous work before departure. Her main concerns at present are the practical issues of reconciling her graduate study and her mothering role at the same time. Being aware of the parental expectations of the society and the pressure from her relatives, she currently struggles to manage her studying and domestic responsibilities.

Mrs. T7 (MI34) had given up a career as a TV director when her husband's overseas assignment in the U.S.A. came up, she immediately decided that she would accompany him and said that she had never regretted her decision as she felt that the overseas transfer was a brand-new start for her. After returning to Japan, she was offered several positions by NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai [Japan Broadcast Network]) where she used to work. However, she turned them all down because she thought she would not be able to contribute in the same way as she had done previously. Although she did not report that she had gone through a difficult re-entry transition, her close friend implied that she had experienced severe re-entry shock during that time (as mentioned in Chapter 4, section 4.2.5), probably because of the uncertainty of the job search. It took her about a year to recover from the emotional depression before she made up her mind to restart her career in a totally different environment, as an English language tutor.

It is possible that a woman will face difficulty when trying to return to a full-time position after she has resigned from the labour market, whether due to marriage, child birth or her husband's transfer. Until an alternative career is available, many career-orientated wives will find themselves in a dilemma. A fragmented work or educational history often precludes an interesting job after re-entry, which, along with geographical discontinuities, can exclude her from being fully socialised into a profession, a process considered essential not only for learning occupational skills but for developing a positive self-image.

5.5.2 Views of women working outside home and 'pin-money'

Table 5.5.2 summarises the current job status of the respondents at present and their plans for the future. In the last two decades, the participation of women in the labour force has steadily increased across all age groups (Nihon Rodo Kyokyu Kiko, 1993). In this study, nearly 70 percent of the returnee wives did not have a paid job when the interviews were conducted (out of thirty-five wives, only two were working full-time and nine were working part-time). In other words, the participation rate in the labour force for the returnee wives was about 30 percent. The corresponding participation rate in the employment for married women, whose husbands are salaried workers, was 73 percent in 2000 (Economic Planning Agency, Japanese Government, 2001). The low rate of employment among the returnee wives may be due in part to the difficulties in finding an adequate work because of the fragmental work history and personal/family situations, including their age and the presence of children. Yet about half of the returnee wives intended to go to work in the future, either to take part-time work or full-time work, or continue paid work.

As can be seen in Table 5.5.2, most returnee wives in the interviews had not been working for some time after their transfer back to Japan (The average period since return to Japan was 2.64 years at the time of each interview). Mrs. F2 (MI17), who attempted to restart her own career immediately after re-entry and felt depressed because of her loss of financial independence, was an exceptional case. Mrs. F3 (MI24) who wished to pursue her study and career in the medical field immediately after returning home, was another exception.

The general impression gained from the interviews was that returnee wives' lives

Table 5.5.2 Current Job Status and Future Plans for Work Outside Home

Current job status and future plans	Frequency
current job status	
not working	17
working part-time (non-voluntary)	9
working full-time (non-voluntary)	2
taking a training course towards a job	1
working as a volunteer	6
total	35
future plans	
no plans for work outside home	10
plans to take a part-time job	11
plans to take a full-time job	7
plans for further training towards a job	2
plans for voluntary work only	5
total	35

are dominated by their roles as wives and mothers. Home and family are the central point of their interests and are regarded by themselves, as well as others, as their primary responsibility. This is also true for Mrs. H (MI15) despite the fact that she had been devoting herself to her profession as an efficient nurse before she left Japan. She emphasised her roles as "home-maker" with a pride and satisfaction even though she had an established career until her husband received his overseas assignment [section 5.4.2 Readjustors, Case No.2: Mrs. H (MI15)].

Mrs. T2 (MI13) describes herself as a housewife despite the fact that she teaches tole paining and flower arrangement to other wives on a regular basis. She admitted that she would not like to pursue her career outside home in a strongly affirmative tone.

> I used to work as an instructor of flower arrangement...I didn't feel an attachment to that job. I didn't feel, "Why do I have to give up my job because of my husband's job?"...After I returned, I just found it was difficult to carry on my

career and to stay in the flower industry...I hadn't done anything for two or three years after returning...recently I started teaching a few mothers in my neighbourhood at home and am now actually paid for it though very little...I'd be happy if I'd be able to continue my hobby and make some money out of it while I look after my daughter and manage the household...I'm not career orientated really.

(Mrs. T2, MI13)

Mrs. Y (MI16) also reported that she had never been ambitious for her own career and labelled herself as "an average Japanese wife", in other words, very much a housewife and mother.

While I was there (in the U.S.A.), I thought that I'd find a job after returning to Japan. I was thinking the same thing during my second overseas stay in Singapore...But once I returned I was really busy with my children's schooling, when they said, "Mum, we want you to be at home for us..." I gave up job hunting easily...I must admit I'm not enthusiastic as far as my job-hunting goes...I've ended up with nothing, but if I have a chance, I'll apply for something.

(Mrs. Y, MI16)

It should be noted that most of the wives interviewed who had worked outside home before their husbands' overseas posting or those who currently work as a part-timer are not willing to emphasise their work as valuable. They were rather reluctant to mention it when asked whether they had been employed or were

currently employed. They said they worked "only as a part-timer" or "just to have a little pocket money" for themselves. They may want to restrain their annual income below a certain amount in order to retain 'dependant' privileges (such as income tax exemptions, exemption from social security payments, and family allowances paid to their husbands). Nevertheless they seemed to be reluctant to take on full-time employment or pursue a career outside home. Most can enjoy their overseas stay as a visitor and sightseer without worrying about starting or restarting their own careers after returning to Japan. Their relatively relaxed attitudes about job-hunting after re-entry may be due to the fact that, as one wife mentioned, they were "lucky enough to have someone who is going to pay the bills".

According to Zelizer (1994), people create distinct kinds of monies. In her book "The Social Meaning of Money", Zelizer (1994:62-63) states that money earned by a housewife can be identified as a very different kind of money to a husband's allowance. She uses the term "pin money" which means the supplementary household income earned by wives (p.62), and used for the family's extra expenses or used by more affluent couples as discretionary "fun" money (p.63). It is used differently, allocated in special ways (p.27) or "treated as a supplementary earning designated either for family expenses (a child's education or a holiday) or for frivolous purposes (clothing or jewellery)" (p.66).

Most of the returnee wives in the interviews were married to corporate executives and were relatively well off. They were ambitious for their husbands' careers rather than for themselves (Kanter, 1977:106). The social ethic that they are not

supposed to help their husbands financially may discourage them to work outside for more than minor incomes.

For example, Mrs. M1 (MI19), Mrs. K4 (MI22) Mrs. S3 (MI20), and Mrs. T4 (MI21), who reported that they experienced little transitional stress in this area, accepted the frequent moves as the price they have to pay for promotion in their husbands' careers and as a part of their way of life. Mrs. M1 (MI19) had to give up her job because of her husband's overseas transfer, though she did not consider it a forced disruption or frustration. She says, "I just don't want to sacrifice our home and family life for a little extra money for myself. Above all, my husband doesn't like me to work outside home". Mrs. F2 (PI3) was one of the other wives who had to give up her work because of her husband's overseas transfer. She talked about balancing a woman's career and her home responsibilities as follows:

> I guess it has to be that way, if one has children. And actually it worked out well. Of course, I know that some women manage to find a balance between their careers and homes. If she makes a tremendous effort, maybe the woman can organise her time so that she can do something else. There are some women like that, but not many...So it's different for different women.
>
> (Mrs. F2, PI3)

Mrs. K4 (MI22) also used to work until her husband's first assignment came up. But again, she stressed that she had no regrets about leaving her job as she thought it was the right time to resign and get married. As she thought it would be difficult to work outside home whilst looking after children and managing the

household, she emphasised that she did not think about getting a job after re-entry. And if by any chance, she wanted to do so, she would need to get permission from her husband.

Similarly, Mrs. S3 (MI20) did not have problems in any of the areas of transitional stresses in this study. She had no anxieties about her professional position after returning to Japan, as she felt no guilt about staying at home as a housewife so was not insecure career-wise. She had a wealthy husband and was expected to carry out her traditional responsibilities as the wife of the first son. She was primarily concerned with the social conventions of Japanese society. Her background in a wealthy urban family in Tokyo had provided her with the same standard of living whilst they were abroad so she did not experience a reduction in lifestyle upon her re-entry either.

Mrs. T4 (MI21) used to be a cooking instructor and had been running her own cooking school from home before her husband's overseas transfer.

> I rated my husband's career as much more important than my own job. I accepted the move as essential to his career and so willingly gave up mine. My cooking school was not something which I'd been building up for a long time.
>
> (Mrs. T4, MI21)

She describes her job as a cooking instructor as "nothing like a demanding and fulfilling career outside home" but something that she can enjoy as an extension of her hobby. She also accepted the move in a positive way, thinking it might provide

an opportunity for her to learn new skills and gain new insights for her cooking career, which might be useful for her later on. Thus giving up her cooking school was not so devastating to her self-esteem and well-being. As her family has been living in company housing since returning, she does not think she is able to re-open her school there. She explained that it would be difficult to run her own business and make money out of it at a place that was provided by her husband's company. She was worried about the perception of other families in the same housing complex and thought her husband would be embarrassed and lose face if the company found out that his wife was running a business from the company housing.

It seems reasonable to assume that, if an individual is exposed to the egalitarian family lifestyles and ideologies of Western countries, where a large number of mothers are working and egalitarianism is pervasive at home and in society, he/she is likely to exhibit a more liberal attitude towards women working outside home. Most supported the idea of working mothers in the host society and admitted the meaningfulness of engaging in serious careers. But in their own cases, they preferred to remain as housewives. For most wives in these interviews, the roles of wife, homemaker and mother were of overwhelming importance. Thus, continuously staying at home, choosing to continue not to work and not finding either a full-time position or an adequate part-time job for some time after re-entry was not a cause of concern for them. They found a great deal to enjoy in being a housewife and considered it a satisfying life, particularly whilst their children were still young. They preferred to work for 'pin money', as an extension of a hobby, possibly utilising skills gained during their overseas sojourns.

Consequently those returnee wives like Mrs. F2 (MI17), with special objectives or intentions to earn more than just 'pin money', tend to suffer more upon their re-entry as they face the difficulties of starting or restarting their careers. If they had to give up their careers to join their husbands' foreign assignments, they may resent any career problems that they have to cope with upon re-entry, i.e., those returnee wives who were more career orientated might have felt frustrated with the way Japanese society operates, if things did not work out as well for them as they expected, when they wanted to rejoin the work force.

5.5.3 Filling in the emptiness

Some company-wives adopted new roles successfully during their husbands' assignments abroad. As stated in the previous chapter, many of them reported that they did not mind performing a company-wife's role or felt no pressure to do so (See Table 4.3.24). However, these roles are no longer needed upon their re-entry. They found themselves in the dilemma of struggling to express the frustration they felt with the status and identity of being a company-wife, e.g., Mrs. A of company B assumed a new status whilst she was abroad but felt she had become a "nobody" after she returned.

For some returnee wives, especially those who had been engaged in performing company-wives' roles or had taken part in various local activities, having plenty of time to think and look back on the experiences can intensify the emotional depression cycles. This situation was evident in Mrs. K3's (MI14) case. She described her feeling of being 'left out' because her husband and children were

busy with their work and school, and as she was not employed after re-entry, she was disassociated from social interaction and became frustrated. She felt this was very hard to deal with. They had nothing to do and often found themselves sitting at home just staring at the wall.

The emptiness caused by a lack of routine and a lack of network affiliation can create a loss of identity. Mrs. K3 (MI14) is one of the wives who reported that their foreign experiences changed their views of women working outside the home. During her sojourn in the U.S.A., she participated as a church volunteer and as a school volunteer, and shared hobbies and sports with other local mothers. This helped her perceive her roles and life more objectively. After re-entry, she started to look back over her years abroad and to think about her life as a mother and a wife in Japan, and she said that she found a huge difference between Japanese women and American women. Thus, the more she reasoned and thought, the more she was influenced by what she had experienced during her sojourn, and in doing so she started to question her traditional roles at home.

For those wives who were working when the interviews were conducted, a part of the reason they had found a job outside their homes was to fill the emptiness they felt and to move on, rather than because of a financial necessity. Mrs. K5 (MI27) also reported that her depression had started after everything had been sorted out. Having only one child, she said, she had plenty of time to think about herself and felt that she had been left behind, as if things were proceeding without her. She emphasised that she really enjoyed her life in Germany. Although she had time to do something just for herself, she realised that she would not be able to spend her

time and fill it as she used to do in Germany. She felt she had to do something and had been thinking about working outside home. After a year and a half she returned. She then started to work five days a week as a part-time sales assistant at a jewellery shop in Tokyo. She is employed as a sales assistant but her work includes taking part in the process of making accessories as well as selling the final products. She describes how she feels now as follows:

> It (the work) doesn't have anything to do with the Germans or Germany. Before getting this job, I worked as a part-time teacher at a private school though I wasn't able to work as a full-timer. My available time was limited so I resigned and looked for something totally different. I just saw an advertisement in the newspaper and immediately decided to go for the interview...I think I'm recovering from that emptiness and getting on with my life now.
>
> (Mrs. K5 MI27)

Several other wives gave similar reasons for trying to find part-time work after re-entry. Mrs. T3 (MI18), returning from the U.S.A. with a certificate for teaching tole painting, has recently started teaching several students at home. She said:

> For now, teaching tole painting is the only thing which allows me to make some money...I hadn't been able to do anything for a year after returning. I was depressed and going through various stresses...But I realised that I'd got to do something to distract myself from the frustrations and the stress...
>
> (Mrs. T3, MI18)

Mrs. O2 (MI23) was another wife who went through an emotional depression and suffered from feelings of emptiness after her re-entry. She intends to take a job when she is able to:

> While I was in America, I came to know various kinds of people, I was able to make friends with them and learned all sorts of things which I wouldn't have been able to do if I'd stayed in Japan all my life. I had a lot of opportunities to learn new things and could try them out by attending local community colleges...However, once I returned to Japan, those sorts of opportunities became very limited. I feel that I'm nobody, just a housewife, who is alone at home...I've been feeling as if I was 'withering' in myself ever since I came back to Japan. I was far more lively and 'shiny' while I was over there...
>
> (Mrs. O2, MI23)

In general, returnee wives who had enjoyed life abroad and actively participated in the local community were found to be active participants in a variety of volunteer organisations in Japan. Some wives worked as voluntary members, which gave them some sort of self-confidence and fulfilment. Mrs. F1 (PI1) has been working as a voluntary staff member at a network supporting returnee families which was organised by returnee mothers. She found that her activities and commitment had a positive effect in dealing with her own re-entry problems.

> I feel contented, as I know I am providing support for people who need it...I mean, it's not easy to understand unless you've experienced something you can't really understand. In fact, I know whether I can do something to help them out

or not as I've gone through similar experiences. So we have all got the same sort of commitment and we are here for the same reasons...I think possibly, had I been sitting at home all day being a fulltime housewife and not going out anywhere, I think the problems might have got to me more. But here I work quite a bit, I come home sort of fresh and even though this is not a paid job, it certainly gets me out and I come home fresh each day, which I think makes life a bit easier really...

(Mrs. N1, PI1)

The attitudes amongst returnee wives about women working outside home are complicated and there are far too many inter-related variables. A number of studies have shown that a woman's labour participation is closely related to her family's situation with regard to the income of her husband or the existence of children (e.g., Nakamura & Ueda, 1999). As stated in the previous section, few wives gave financial necessity as the chief incentive for going out to work. Most preferred to work for 'pin money', as an extension of a hobby. And for them, their job would have to come second to the demands of their homes and families. It might also have to be part-time.

However, other motives, such as interest in their work or the pleasure of meeting people, were also important. By far the most frequently mentioned reason for going out to work was the opportunity it might provide for reassuring their own identity, making new friends and developing wider interests. The problem was to find a job, which would not affect other commitments, but which was sufficiently satisfying to make it worth going to work.

Some returnee wives, such as Mrs. H (MI15), Mrs. F2 (MI17) and Mrs. F3 (MI24), have actively pursued a series of changes that have carried them into a new niche for themselves after re-entry. Mrs. T2 (MI13), Mrs. T3 (MI18) and Mrs. T4 (MI21), on the other hand, followed a course that involved a search for personal fulfilment by utilising the skills they gained or improved through their overseas stay, balancing their home responsibilities and their work.

The presence of children of specific age groups places returnee mothers in a certain situation after re-entry. The low employment rate among the returnee wives might also be partly due to the fact that many had younger children (twelve out of thirty-three mothers had children aged under five years old at the time of re-entry). If adequate social services, that provide support for working mothers, were available to them (possibly from their extended families), this may have influenced their labour force participation. Certainly a proportion did intend to take a job outside home in the future (Table 5.5.2) and many more are likely to become engaged in paid work when their children are older.

Most returnee mothers in this study were concerned about their children's readjustment at first, which kept them busy from the moment they returned to Japan. It should be noted that none of the eight wives who reported that they had a difficult readjustment had children five years of age or under at the time of re-entry (including two wives without children). In other words, young children would have kept them busy during the transitional period, which may in turn have distracted them from their own readjustment problems. Among those who experienced difficult transitions, most reported that their depression and isolation

started after their children had settled into the new environment.

Thus, the readjustment problems for the wives without children seem to be different from those of the returnee mothers. There were only two wives without children in the sample and this study does not deal with childless women in specific detail. However, the impression was that they tend to keep their jobs or engage in part-time work or study throughout their life. These wives appear to have to spend more time in dealing with their own readjustment than women with children. Thus they may encounter different readjustment problems that occur when returnee mothers reintegrate into their old environment. In this study the two wives without children were found to have experienced even greater difficulty in readjusting upon their return to Japan. Both wives reported that they felt they got over their re-entry shock when they found jobs outside home and started working.

5.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 reflected on some of the main themes in the returnee wives' readjustment experiences which emerge from the research. The approach taken in the examination and discussion focused on the specific nature of Japanese society, which is characterised by social and cultural homogeneity and conformity. This chapter described the extent to which human relationships specific to the Japanese culture put pressure on women returnees. It did this by examining areas such as group distinction and membership identification, and 'pollution' issues resulting from living abroad and marginality. This chapter also presented the

coping strategies used by the returnee wives who may be marginalised in different degrees, depending on their circumstances. Three returnee wives, who seemed to represent three distinct types of coping strategy (i.e., the reassimilators, adjustors and disassociators) were described as "topical, short life histories". The final part of Chapter 5 focused on the problems in starting or restarting their own careers after returning to Japan. The returnee wives' attitudes towards women working outside home, the perceptions of their own working lives, and the possible reasons for the low employment rate for returnee women were also explored in this section.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

In this last chapter, the overview and main findings of the study are summarised. The first section reviews the research questions. In the following sections, the main findings from the interviews will be discussed. These include the identified readjustment difficulties, the factors which seemed to affect the degree of re-entry difficulty and the coping strategies employed to deal with re-entry stresses. The theoretical implications will be discussed by comparing the findings with models in existing re-entry and reacculturation research, as well as with Sussman's (2002, 2000, 1986) Cultural Identity Model. As this study has been exploratory in nature, future research questions generated by the study's findings will be proposed. The implications arising from the findings will be considered and suggestions will be made for possible ways of addressing the reasons why the returnee wives experienced these readjustment difficulties. These suggestions are presented in the last section.

6.1 Findings and General Discussion

6.1.1 Research questions

This study started with a fundamental question, "Why is repatriation often difficult?" In order to answer this question, the experiences and thoughts of a selected group of Japanese returnee wives who attempted to readapt to and re-establish themselves in their home country were investigated.

By using a qualitative approach, the study highlighted some of the difficulties, processes and strategies of the readjustment of the returnee wives. It focused on three main research questions: 1) What are the specific problems of reverse culture shock which were experienced by the returnee wives? 2) How do the various situational and/or attitudinal factors affect the extent to which individuals exhibit difficulties? How have the specific values and norms of Japanese society influenced their re-entry processes? 3) How did they cope with the readjustment difficulties? What sort of strategies did they use to deal with the problems?

6.1.2 Main findings

The study proved that readjustment was a challenge for most of the returnee wives interviewed when they reintegrated into the home society after a relatively long residence in another culture. The results suggested that the re-entry shock experienced by the returnee wives was different to the shock experienced when they had first entered the new culture. Whilst the initial culture shock was associated with the sense of disorientation brought on by the new and unfamiliar environment, reverse culture shock was precipitated by returning to a setting which they had presumed would be familiar but which in reality had become unfamiliar.

For some returnee wives, re-entry shock and readjustment difficulties were described as the anxiety, confusion, disappointment and frustration which resulted when they tried to re-establish themselves in their own culture after a

prolonged absence. These problems were aggravated by feelings of marginality and heightened alienation at the discovery that they had become "strangers to their own culture." Although the wives in general had a smaller vocabulary in expressing their feelings, their isolation and depression, as revealed in the interviews, were often intense. These feelings could only be detected and extracted by the interviewer and this is one of the distinct advantages of using a face-to-face interview methodology to collect data when the quality is as important as the quantity.

Returning home is an aspect of the cultural readjustment process that can cause strong emotional reactions. Yet, in comparison to the adjustment process undertaken when sojourners move abroad, the process of re-entry adjustment has attracted scant attention from researchers. Most of the research on re-entry to Japan has focused on certain groups of sojourners only: children who returned to the Japanese educational system (e.g., Goodman, 1990; Kobayashi, 1982b; Murase, 1985; Watanabe & Wada, 1991), college and university students who had studied abroad (e.g., Bennett, Passin & Mcknight, 1958; Domoto, 1987) and corporate employees who had returned to Japanese organisations after carrying out overseas assignments (e.g., Miyamoto, 1994; White, 1988). However, very little research has been published on the readjustment of spouses who had accompanied their husbands during overseas postings.

The intention of this research was to help address this gap by examining the impact of the readjustment faced by a group of thirty-five Japanese returnee wives and exploring the problems and coping strategies they exhibited. This

study is one of the few empirical attempts to address the readjustment difficulties from the accompanying spouses' perspectives. It provides empirical data which supports the notion that the initial stages of the readjustment process incorporate potential psychological and socio-cultural difficulties although the degrees of difficulty encountered varied from individual to individual. This study also identified several important factors that might have influenced the returnee wives' readjustments, whilst maintaining and supporting some of the previous findings.

Another contribution of this study is that its findings suggest that several readjustment problems were related to the home country of the returnees. The results confirm that there were unique cultural patterns that gave the returning wives specific readjustment problems. The effects of crossing geographical and socio-cultural boundaries seemed to make it particularly difficult for the Japanese returnee wives to re-integrate into their previous social circles of friends, colleagues, and communities. The results are consistent with Ebuchi's (1986:294-321) argument that it is the specific nature of Japanese society which creates additional readjustment problems for the returnee children. He pointed out that some of the problems of returnee children can be attributed to the unique nature of Japanese society, i.e., the exclusive and homogenous characteristics of the socio-cultural structures, and he suggested the necessity of a reformation of the social systems/organisations as well as an increase in people's awareness of multicultural perspectives. The major factors which seemed to affect the returnee wives' readjustments are summarised in the next section.

6.1.3 Factors affecting readjustment

The results of this study found that there appeared to be varying degrees of readjustment difficulty, just as there are degrees of culture shock. This study explored some factors that seemed to have affected the level of readjustment difficulty experienced by the returnee wives. A summary of the seven factors follows:

1. Degree of integration into the foreign culture

Previous re-entry studies (e.g., Brislin & Van Buren, 1974; Martin, 1984, Suda, 1999; Sussman, 2000, 1986) have suggested that those who were well-integrated into the local community would be more likely to perceive their overseas experience positively, which might in turn affect their readjustment. In other words, the more involved and integrated they became into the host society, the harder it may be to leave it behind and the more difficult their readjustment to the home culture would be. In this study, the wives' degrees of involvement in the local communities were assessed by examining the activities in which they had been involved, how frequently they had participated, how long they had been engaged in the local activities and how many close friends they had from the native community. *The results indicated a tendency for those who participated in the foreign culture to a greater degree to be more likely to have readjustment problems than those who integrated to a lesser degree.*

As well as the impact relating to the degree of involvement in the host community,

this section intended to examine whether the self-reported levels of integration into the foreign culture had an impact on the returnee wives' overall readjustment levels. From the interview data, it may be concluded that *the wives who perceived themselves as well integrated into the foreign culture were more likely to have experienced difficult transitions after returning home.* The theory that the more successful a person is at adapting to a foreign culture, the harder it will be to readapt to the home culture (e.g., Brislin & Van Buren, 1974, Suda, 1999; Sussman, 2000, 1986) seemed to be supported by the present interview results.

2. Degree of involvement in the expatriate community

It is generally assumed that the degree of involvement in an expatriate community will influence the sojourner's re-entry transition. Those who stay within expatriate communities will have more communication with their home country and will be more familiar with changes and developments in the home culture. Thus, it was expected that those wives who stayed outside the Japanese circles/networks would be more likely to experience re-entry shock. On the other hand, it was reasonable to think that those who were more absorbed in the expatriate community would be less likely to have re-entry difficulties as they maintained stronger links with a more familiar environment, i.e. one similar to the home culture. In this study, *most returnee wives who experienced difficult transitions had had a lower involvement in the Japanese expatriate communities, i.e. the degree of involvement in the Japanese communities suggested an inverse relationship with readjustment difficulties.*

3. Levels of desire to return home

It was generally assumed that those who had a strong desire to remain abroad would experience greater difficulties and would be more likely to feel alienated upon re-entry. While those who had a strong desire to return home at the end of their sojourn are likely to return with a higher motivation to re-socialise. The results confirm the findings from previous studies (e.g., Adler, 1976; Brislin & Van Buren, 1974; Martin, 1984) that *there was a tendency that those wives who were eager to go home or who had a moderate desire to return would be more likely to have minor or no readjustment problems and that those who had a desire to remain abroad would experience more difficult re-entry transitions.*

4. Perception towards overseas experience

In this study, it was speculated that the more favourable the wives' current opinions about the overseas assignments, the more difficult were their lives after returning to Japan. If they were not relatively well re-adjusted and happy about their daily lives after re-entry, it was expected that they would identify positively with their previous overseas experiences. Conversely, those who seemed well adjusted to their lives in Japan did not stress the benefits of their overseas experiences. All of those wives who went through severe readjustment periods perceived their overseas experiences as positive or very positive. Additionally, most of those who reported that they had minor readjustment problems identified their overseas sojourns in the categories of either positive or very positive. Thus, *these results indicated a tendency that the more wives perceived their*

international assignments as positive, the more they tended to have readjustment problems in general.

5. Value change

Overseas experiences can bring about changes in a person. The encounters with a new culture, the difficulty or inability to communicate in a foreign language, and the experience of being part of an ethnic minority, possibly for the first time, may alter the sojourners' views and interaction with other people including their own family and friends. Smith (1991) categorised the changes identified following student sojourns in three types: "cognitive" (knowledge about the host culture, cultural differences, and their impact on communication interactions), "affective" (tolerance of ambiguity, empathy, and ability to suspend judgment) and "behavioural" (ability to solve problems, form relationships and accomplish necessary tasks within an intercultural context). As mentioned in Chapter 4, section 4.3 "Analysis of the Interview Data II", most of the returnee wives in this study also reported experiencing changes of these three types.

In this study it was difficult to suggest whether the wives' value changes from their overseas stays increased the level of intensity of their re-entry adjustment, since the majority of the wives interviewed who reported positive value changes as a result of living abroad, and all three of the wives who reported no changes in their values, experienced minor readjustment difficulties. *However, all of those who went through severe readjustment difficulties reported that they had undergone shifts in their values, either in their increased self-confidence,*

broadened views and raised tolerance to different cultures and that these changes influenced their re-entry processes, This does not contradict the result from Isa's (1996) study that suggested that the women's values change because of their extended stays abroad (in the U.S.A.) and that this was one of the significant predictors associated with both re-entry shock and reintegration.

6. Perception about Japan

Perceptions about Japan were expected to influence readjustment in the sense that those who had more critical attitudes towards their home country would experience greater stress in the re-entry process. This is derived from the premise that returnee wives' exposure to different cultures is likely to give them more objective views of their home country. On the other hand, if the returnees have a more idealised view of their home country, they will have a strong desire to return home and less desire to cling to their overseas lives, and they tend to readjust to the home environment more readily. *The results of this study showed a tendency for those who had a negative perception about Japan to be likely to experience a difficult transition back to Japan,* which supports Sussman's (2002, 2000) argument in the Cultural Identity Model (CIM) (to be discussed in section 6.2.4 in this chapter).

7. Thoughts about being a company-wife

Amongst the five wives who positively viewed their company-wife roles during their assignments and subsequently experienced severe readjustment problems,

none of them stated in an obvious way that she felt she had a difficult re-entry adjustment because of the lack of contact with her husband's job or the loss of the company-wife status. However, a closer examination of individual cases suggested that, for several wives, their reported feelings of aimlessness and emptiness after re-entry partly stemmed from their ambiguous status. If they did not start work after re-entry or could not find an adequate job, these feelings would be intensified. These wives might have adopted new roles during their husbands' overseas assignments, but these were not necessary after their return home. The results partly supported Muto's (1994) finding that the loss of the company-wife role had affected the returnee wives' re-entry transitions.

In summary, the results from the interview data suggested that the *situational factors*, such as the foreign location (although difficulties in readjusting to living conditions at home were different for different returnees, depending on their previous lifestyles and involvement), the length of stay abroad and the time spent back in Japan, were not as important for every re-entry adjustment, as their influences were subject to several moderators. On the other hand, the *attitudinal variables* (self-rated levels of integration into the foreign culture, desire to return home, perceptions towards overseas experiences and perceptions about Japan) seemed to have more significant effects on the returnee wives' readjustment to their home environment.

6.1.4 Coping strategies

It was possible to gain some insights into the returnee wives' readjustments through their descriptions of the strategies they used to cope with the

readjustment difficulties. There were three different personality types easily discernible amongst the informants in the ways in which they dealt with the transition. They were: "Reassimilators", "Adjustors" and "Disassociators". These differentiations are similar to those identified in Olson's (1992) three different reactions in handling re-entry.

1) *Reassimilators:* The reassimilators had a relatively smooth re-entry. These individuals quickly overcame the initial reverse culture shock by acting as an insider and modifying their behaviours and values. They denied the impact of the experience and refused to even try to discuss it with others. This enabled them to be more readily included in the native groups. These returnees, the "Assimilators" in Olson's (1992:1) classification, may seem to have readjusted well, but they may have missed out on the growth opportunity as they did not seem to have integrated their overseas experiences into their lives after re-entry.

2) *Readjustors:* The readjustors found ways to utilise their newly-acquired cultural knowledge, language or artistic skills. They even acquired the ability to see their home country critically and yet maintained a cultural identity with their home country. The wives in this category were similar to those Olson (1992) classifies as "Integrators", those who are able to identify the changes they have undergone and see their overseas experiences as having a lasting impact on their lives.

3) *Disassociators:* The "Alienators" in Olson's (1992) category are those who were absorbed in the foreign country and then tend to have difficult re-entries. Most of

the respondent wives in this category seemed to have been well-integrated into the host communities, but their becoming a "native" in a foreign country represented a threat to the social and cultural order of their home country on their return. They tended to be more critical of the home culture. The disassociators in this study had accepted "outsider" (marginal) positions and were voluntarily isolated from the mainstream groups. They were similar to those which Weaver (1994) describes as people who never actually return home, or who actually deny they are at home.

A consideration of the distortions and denials of their experiences by the "Reassimilators" and "Disassociators" may illustrate the returnee wives' awareness of their ambiguous status under the group distinctions, which now define them as "marginal" members who have crossed the socio-cultural boundaries.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

The following section reviews the theories about re-entry shock in order to present a theoretical framework to connect the findings from this study. The existing theories offered in the literature, were useful in order to understand the underlying factors, but were not appropriate to incorporate all the findings of this study. The results from this study suggest that it is not possible to incorporate the entire complexity of the re-entry experiences of the returnee women into one single theory, but rather, several perspectives should be taken and theories and models should be examined in light of the findings obtained from this study.

6.2.1 The applicability of the concept of culture shock to reverse culture shock

Some research on repatriation views overseas and re-entry transitions as similar. Its emphasis is the response to unfamiliar environments. For example, Stori (2001) refers to the classical concept of "culture shock" and suggests that the re-entry and readjustment, can also be seen as a response to an unfamiliar environment, entailing the loss of familiar social cues and adjustment to a new communication system and different relational rules.

The results from this study however, found that the returnee wives' reactions to the re-entry difficulties appeared to be psychologically different from their initial adaptation in the host countries. Most wives in this study had been away from Japan for three to five years. It would not be reasonable to think that the home environment had changed so rapidly and radically within these moderate periods of time, to make it look like a totally new and unfamiliar environment and plunge them into "reverse culture shock". This perspective may however, predict the re-entry experiences of other populations such as returnees with lengthy sojourn experiences coming back to a drastically changed home environment (for example, those returning to Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall). As Meintel (1973) indicates, when their transitional stresses are attributed to the strangeness of the culture to which the sojourners must adapt, the intensity of reverse culture shock becomes difficult to explain. Locating the cause of the difficulty in the change of culture, the concept of "culture shock" and the experiences of those who enter unfamiliar settings, does not sufficiently explain the returnee wives' readjustment difficulties discussed in this study.

6.2.2 The stage theory and curves of adjustment

Some researchers (e.g., Oberg, 1960; Smalley, 1963) proposed several stages of culture shock that sojourners experience when they adjust to a host culture. For example, "honey moon/fascination stage", "stage of hostility", "recovery/improved stage", and "final stage/stage of biculturalism". Asuncion-Lande (1980) suggested that the stages of readjustment of returnees to their home cultures can be described as four distinctive patterns of response to the re-entry shock. These patterns are defined as "excitement", "re-establishment/frustration", "sense of control", and "readaptation". These patterns are similar to the stages of adjustment to the host culture.

Furthermore, these stages or phases relating to the sojourner's satisfaction level, follow a chronological order which has been called the "U-curve of adjustment cycle" (Lysgaard, 1955). W-curve hypothesis, an extension of Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve hypothesis, assumes that returnees undergo an acculturation process in their home environments similar to that experienced on moving abroad (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

This study did not find curves of readjustment similar to those described in the second part of the W-curve hypothesis. The order of stages/phases varied from individual to individual and the low satisfaction occurred at different points. These stages/phases were not necessarily sequential and were not experienced by all the respondents in this study. For example, some wives who experienced severe re-entry distress described intense feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration

or depression even before they had actually left the host country. Contrary to the proposed W-curve of readjustment, the interview data obtained in this study suggests that time elapsed since returning has little effect on the severity of readjustment difficulties. Whilst some of the wives reported feeling comfortable again or at least able to get along in the home environment after twelve to eighteen months, this did not show a curvilinear relationship and some other wives remained uncomfortable even several years after their re-entry. The theory that the readjustment process is continual with one low point followed by a gradual, ever increasing readaptation was not shown by the results of this study.

6.2.3 The culture learning model

The "culture learning approach" is a relatively recent conceptual framework and examines sojourner adjustment in terms of culture learning using conditioning and social learning principles (Bochner, 1972; David, 1976; Guthrie, 1975; Schild, 1962). Instead of analysing adjustment as something that occurs inside the person, Bochner (1972) views adjustment as the acquisition over time of behaviours, skills and norms that are appropriate to the social roles that the sojourner is required to enact.

The culture learning model predicts that during the initial overseas adjustment period new general adjustment skills are learned, and the returnees can then utilise these skills during the repatriation adjustment process to ease their repatriation distress (Sussman, 2001:120). The model suggests that successful overseas adaptation can be seen in terms of a sojourner's effectiveness in

cross-cultural coping skills which are transferred to the repatriation process to help deal with the transitional stress. The culture learning model is based on the prediction that the more successful the overseas adaptation, the more skillful one becomes in cultural adaptation, and consequently, the better sojourners are able to cope with re-entry difficulties (Sussman, 2002:393). However, re-entry shock poses an interesting paradox to theories of culture learning: Why does a returning sojourner who has developed a "heightened self-awareness" and new intercultural communication skills still encounter problems upon returning to a culture which is not unknown? If intercultural learning as a result of living abroad and exposure to a foreign culture produces greater communication competency, then why is discomfort still suffered during the re-entry transition?

The present study found that most wives had gained broadened views of the world and increased cross-cultural competency as a result of their overseas sojourns, but the findings also exposed an inverse relationship between overseas adaptation (the degree of integration into the host society) and the level of distress and difficulty in the return to the home country. In addition, the results showed a somewhat surprising relationship between multiple experiences of staying abroad (and returning) and re-entry satisfaction. Of the eight respondents who had experienced more than one sojourn and re-entry, i.e., those who would be expected to have acquired greater inter-cultural adaptation skills, only three wives reported that their most recent re-entry was easier than the previous one. The rest of the repeaters (n=5) stated that they actually felt more depressed during their second or third repatriation period. Furthermore, despite the theoretical appeal, the differences between those who had multiple overseas

experiences and the 'first-timers' did not seem significant in this study, suggesting learned intercultural skills did not necessarily ease their repatriation transition.

6.2.4 The self-discovery/cultural identity model

The theory of self-discovery or cultural identity change seems to help explain some of the ironies associated with re-entry shock. For instance, if a returnee seeks rapid readjustment to the home culture at the expense of his/her adopted value system, one might expect the sojourner to experience stresses in those values as reintegration into the home society takes place. This is the case suggested by Ruben and Kealey (1979). Also, because of this consciously forced modification of 'changed-self', one might expect those who adapted best to the foreign culture to experience the most difficulty when they are confronted with the home environment and its social relationship structures upon their return. This was also indicated by Bochner (1977).

Sussman (2002, 2001, 2000) has recently proposed a broader and more integrated theory of the transition process using a social psychological framework, specifically focusing on self-concept and cultural identity. Findings in the present study provided substantial support for some of Sussman's (2002, 2001) tenets in her Cultural Identity Model (CIM): Shifts in cultural identity serve as a mediator between cultural adaptation (in the host society) and repatriation in the home society. This predicts that, amongst the repatriates, the weaker the home country identity (the more negatively repatriates perceive their home country), the more

estranged they feel and the more they suffer repatriation distress.

When adapting to a foreign culture, the wives went through an "identity change", playing new roles and discovering new ways of looking at the world and at themselves. After returning to their home country, they may again have faced a series of adjustments including their personal relationships, social changes that may have occurred during their absence and their own changed self-identities. Values and behaviours that were reinforced in the foreign culture were often unrewarded in the home culture. As reported in the earlier sections, enhanced self-awareness, increased self-confidence, broadened views of the world and increased tolerance for differences were some of the changes frequently reported by the returnee wives as a result of living abroad.

Some wives experienced distress because they had interwoven many of the host country's values and behaviours into their own value systems. Acting on the host country values and behaviours when back in the home country caused discomfort for repatriates and those in contact with them. The more a returnee wife struggles to reintegrate into the old environment by modifying her behaviour, the more she challenges the 'changed perception about herself'. Yet other wives felt as though they would no longer fit into the social circles in their home environments. They felt less "Japanese", the once-familiar ways of behaving appeared strange and once-cherished values seemed unimportant, irrelevant or negative. These repatriates felt external to their friends' circles and found it difficult to relate to them.

For the returnees, the re-entry experience involved a reinterpretation of self as their social environment had undergone significant changes both internally (changed self-perception as a result of living abroad) and externally (changed physical environment, socio-cultural values and social relationships in the home culture). The expected social role as an expatriate wife was also transformed from that experienced when living in the foreign environment.

Sussman's (2002, 2001, 2000) argument regarding changed identity as a result of living abroad seems to fit reasonably well with the interview data though her findings are based on American managers returned from abroad (2001) and American teachers returning from Japan (2002). Sussman (2002:394) herself admits that the CIM is most applicable to sojourners native to cultures in which individualism is high and cultural identity is low in centrality and salience. It should also be noted that, unlike children, adult sojourners are less likely to experience drastic identity change and identity confusion. Thus, Sussman's model might have particular value for younger sojourners who often have not fully developed a firm cultural identity and who are more likely to incorporate other cultures into their lifestyles through overseas sojourns. In the cases of adult sojourners, where cultural identity is not a salient issue, the concept of perceived cultural marginality may be more useful. This concept goes beyond an individual's changed identity to include home country characteristics such as tolerance of differences, internationalism and cultural homogeneity.

Consequently, the researcher has proposed a model that she considers better describes the situation of returnees who re-enter a home culture in which

collectivism is high and external validation of the overseas experience is important.

6.2.5 Perceived marginality by the returnees, and the home society

Very few studies have investigated the home culture characteristics as a key variable that influences the returnees' repatriation experiences. Sussman (2002, 2000) is one of the few who points out that cultural identity change needs to be perceived and evaluated against the background of the home culture's perspective on cultural heterogeneity and the degree of tolerance for cultural identity variability. Sussman (2000) examined samples of corporate returnees from three countries representing the continuum from cultural homogeneity to multiculturalism (Japan, the U.S., Holland) to investigate their overseas and re-entry experiences. Her preliminary results indicated that the returnees' home culture characteristic, i.e., the degree of tolerance for divergent ways of thinking and behaving, was one of the factors that influences their re-entry difficulties.

Sussman (2002:405, 2000:396) suggested that her Cultural Identity Model should be tested with different populations having more cultural diversity. It is likely, for example, that cultural dimensions of collectivism-individualism (Hofstede, 1991) or cultural "tightness" and "looseness", i.e., the degree of deviation from behavioural norms tolerated (Triandis, 1995, 1994), influence a sojourner's experiences in repatriation. Triandis (1995, 1994) argued that the tightness-looseness dimension is closely related to collectivism-individualism in many cultures. He suggested that collectivistic cultures tend to be tight cultures

where people are expected to behave exactly as specified by norms and individualistic cultures tend to be loose cultures where deviation from norms is tolerated. Such tolerance is found in relatively heterogeneous societies. Several scholars (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Markus & Kitayama 1991; Triandis, 1995, 1994) have noted the stronger collectivistic and tight orientation of Japanese culture in their comparisons between the cultures of the United States and Japan. For example, Triandis (1995, 1994) stated that tightness is particularly high in the collectivistic Japanese culture due to their Confucian teachings, island topography, and cultural homogeneity.

The present study found that the severity of the wives' re-entry difficulties was influenced by their home culture characteristics (e.g., the degree of cultural homogeneity), and how the home culture viewed their overseas experiences and the accompanying personal changes (its perspective on the returnees). More specifically, the attributions of their friends and other people in their social circles, that is, the external validation of the overseas experiences of the returnee wives.

As previous research (e.g., Gama & Pedersen, 1977; Martin, 1984; Uehara, 1986) indicated, reverse culture shock or readjustment difficulty is a common phenomena for people who return to their home culture after an extensive period of residing abroad, regardless of their nationality or to which country they return. However, the readjustment difficulties upon re-entry, especially concerning the reintegration into the social circles, seemed to be more problematic in Japan than many other countries. For many of the returnee wives interviewed for this study,

the most difficult aspect of returning, other than their children's educational readjustment, was gaining acceptance socially, i.e., *the reintegration into their social circles including their old friends, relations and acquaintances.*

Faced with a person who shows certain characteristics that differ from the mainstream, the society will respond in one of two ways: either the ambiguous person will be forced to abandon those characteristics and become as much like a "pure" Japanese as possible (the Reassimilators) or the person will be classified simply as "non-Japanese (the Disassociators)". Thus, full re-entry into the society is difficult at best as people treat them differently and are hesitant to allow them back into the structure of the culture.

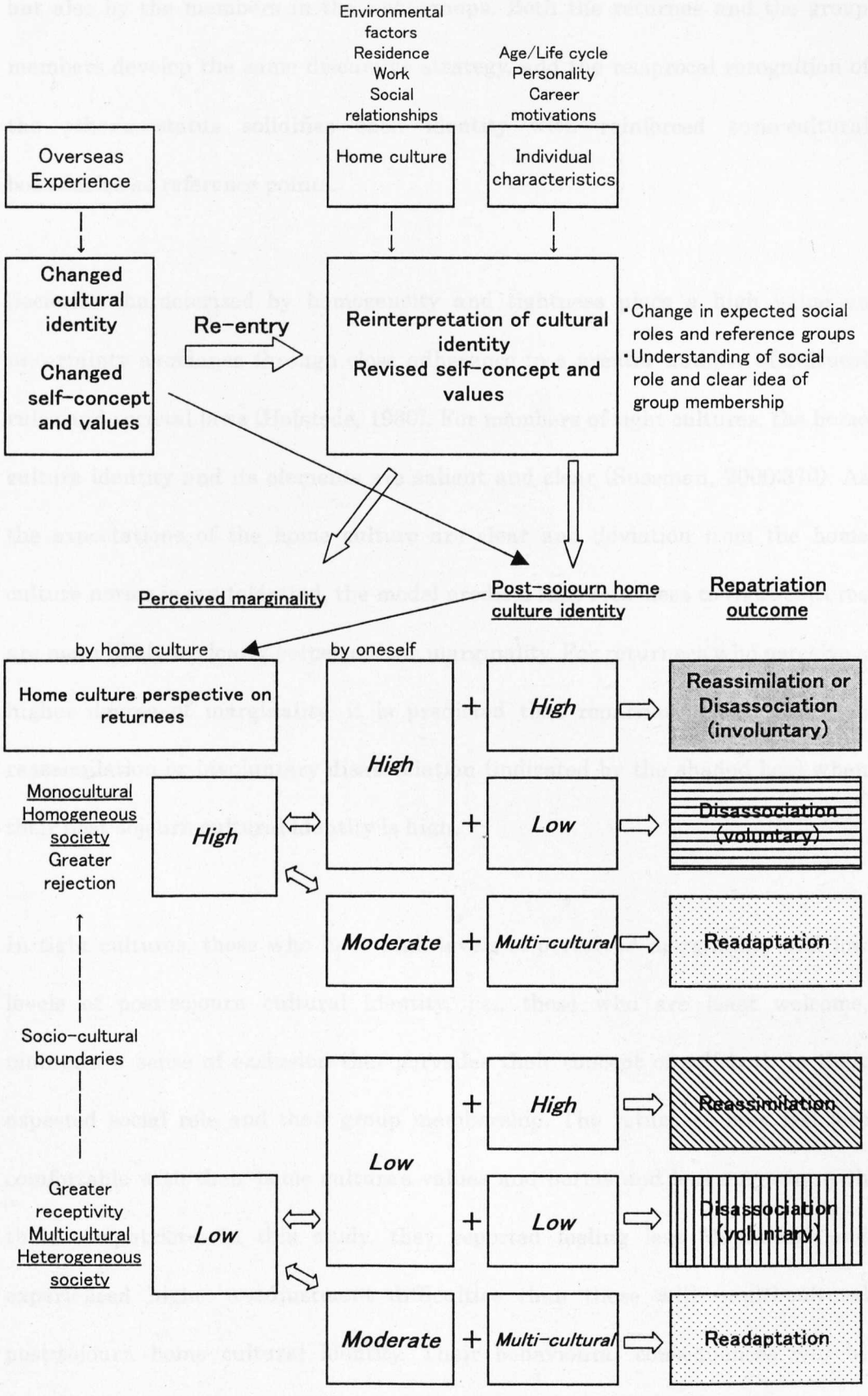
As outsiders or strangers in the home society's context, the returnee wives are forced, even in their homeland, to reconsider their reference groups. The ideas of group membership and the distinctions between inside-group and outside-group, also go through a reinterpretation. The returnee may experience this as a realisation of her marginal status (as she neither belongs to an "*uchi*" nor "*soto*" group) and a process of re-categorising her position in the home society by dealing with her marginality. The Marginal Man theory, developed by Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935), provides a compelling, though discomforting, explanation for the treatment of returnees in Japanese society. Social distance between groups causes returnees to be marginalised by both home (*uchi*) and foreign (*soto*) groups as they struggle to find an appropriate group with which they can fully identify. This mechanism of revised self-perception, though considerably influenced by social structure of the home context, involves review

and reassessment of self that occurs as an internal process.

However, the concept of *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) is by no means a simple dichotomy with a distinct borderline. In reality, varying degrees of intermediate identities between the two conceptual poles do exist. No direct measurement of the returnee wives' marginality were made in this study. Nevertheless, some of the wives' behaviour, feelings and reactions can be interpreted as being "marginal". The result of the national characteristics of conformity and homogeneity seemed to have made them develop feelings of marginality and to become psychologically isolated in the home culture.

The repatriation model proposed by this study illustrates that, as a consequence of the interaction of changed culture identity and values, and the degree of perceived marginality (both by the returnees themselves and by their home society), three types of repatriation outcomes might occur to deal with the re-entry difficulties (see Figure 6.2.1 below). The way in which socio-cultural values and human relationships in the home society welcome or reject returnees may be seen as a continuum from greater receptivity to greater rejection and this will consequently influence the coping strategies engaged to deal with the re-entry distress. Along this continuum, individual returnees have to contend with revised roles, status and the outside-group definitions (such as strangers, marginals or outsiders) imposed on them by the home society. The changed self-concept or cultural identity resulting from living abroad is perceived and evaluated by the home culture against the background of its perspective on cultural heterogeneity and its degree of tolerance for differences. Thus, the

Figure 6.2.1 Cultural Identity, Perceived Marginality and Coping Strategies



marginal status is maintained not only by the returnees' perception of themselves but also by the members in the *uchi*-groups. Both the returnee and the group members develop the same discursive strategy, and the reciprocal recognition of the other's status solidifies each identity with reinforced socio-cultural boundaries as reference points.

Societies characterised by homogeneity and tightness place a high value on uncertainty avoidance through close adherence to a greater number of cultural rules and societal laws (Hofstede, 1980). For members of tight cultures, the home culture identity and its elements are salient and clear (Sussman, 2000:370). As the expectations of the home culture are clear and deviation from the home culture norms is not tolerated, the model predicts that returnees to tight cultures are more likely to clearly perceive their marginality. For returnees who perceive a higher degree of marginality, it is predicted that repatriation will result in reassimilation or involuntary disassociation (indicated by the shaded box) when their post-sojourn cultural identity is high.

In tight cultures, those who have high levels of perceived marginality and low levels of post-sojourn cultural identity, i.e., those who are least welcome, maintain a sense of exclusion that pervades their concept of self both in their expected social role and their group membership. The returnees may feel less comfortable with their home culture's values and norms and less empathy with their compatriots. In this study, they reported feeling less "Japanese" and experienced higher readjustment difficulties than those with multi-cultural post-sojourn home cultural identity. Their behavioural consequences will be

voluntary isolation and disassociation (indicated as the horizontally striped box in the model).

Conversely, heterogeneous cultures have fewer rules, more flexible normative standards, and are typically more tolerant of deviations from cultural norms (Hofstede, 1980, Sussman, 2000). As the society is more receptive, the degree of perceived marginality is consequentially low and reassimilation of the returnee to the *uchi* (mainstream) group is expected when the returnee's post-sojourn cultural identity is high. If the returnee's post-sojourn home culture identity is low in the 'loose' society, the repatriation results in voluntarily disassociation from the mainstream groups (the vertically striped box in the figure).

In both loose and tight cultures, between these poles of perception and acceptance lie those with 'multi-cultural identity' who have acquired the ability to see their home country critically, and yet maintain some home culture identity (dotted boxes in the figure). They objectively perceive their marginal positions, and they are able to identify the changes they have undergone and see their overseas experiences as opportunities for self-growth. This multi-cultural identity results in positive responses and little readjustment distress. They are also able to interact appropriately and effectively in various cross-cultural situations. Those with multi-cultural identity might seek to develop friendships with individuals representing many cultures, keep in touch with their foreign connections, and participate actively in a wide range of international groups and networks.

Significant differences exist between the way in which different cultures perceive overseas experiences and their usefulness in the home culture (Suusman, 1986:242). There are dangers in employing the Western rationale that views overseas experiences as productive and worthy of being integrated into one's behaviour and thinking (Sussman, 1986:242). Japanese culture however, tends to view an overseas experience and the accompanying personal value changes rather negatively and as a disadvantage since, as a result, returnees appear different from others in the home culture.

It should be noted however, that this exclusion, defined boundary and marginal status, seem to help the returnee wives, especially among the 'Disassociators' and 'Readjustors', in realising their sense of positive returnee identity (See Chapter 5, 5.3). Some wives in this study did not view their marginality as a negative outsider status. One "disassociated' wife who had had a difficult transition back home narrated her feelings of being marginal as, "You can be comfortable as an outsider...I actually feel a sense of superiority when I am with my returnee friends...". Weaver (1994) says that some returnees form groups of "Been tos" (as in been to the United States), that is, groups of former expatriates who exclude those who have never actually lived overseas. The boundaries seem to give them a sense of identity by which returnees can divide up their social world and place themselves within a new group.

6.2.6 Theoretical implications of the findings for returnee wives and Japanese corporate culture

The examination of the phenomenon under investigation identifies aspects of the relationship between the expectations of Japanese corporate culture on one hand and the changing role of the company-wives on the other. It illuminates the position of the wives in which the social character ascribed to them is a subordinate function of their husbands' occupational identity and the corporate culture to which they belong. The findings of this study illustrate the underlying, often unseen, circumstances of Japanese company-wives and locate their status in the context of a deep-rooted corporate culture. The following section will discuss the impact of the organisation's objectives and interests, its values and norms, and its formal and informal control systems on the wives of its overseas employees. It is divided into three aspects which highlight the unique situation of the company-wives in relation to the corporate culture of Japan: 1) The lack of recognition of the phenomenon; 2) The 'company-wife identity' and gender role attitude; and 3) The transition from a company-wife to a returnee wife.

1) The lack of recognition of the phenomenon

Research into the experiences of returning spouses, usually wives, of business expatriates is very limited, particularly in comparison to the large volume of literature on returnee children. Spouses, in general, have remained 'invisible sojourners' from researchers' perspectives. This relative neglect results from society's inherent assumption that returnee wives have no problems in managing their readjustment to Japan (Isa, 1996; Muto, 1994; Suda, 1999). There is little concern about the stress which returnee wives experience because of the belief that, as they have returned to a familiar environment and that, unlike returnee children, they clearly see themselves as Japanese who temporarily resided in a foreign country, they are unlikely to experience the same problems of 'identity

confusion'. Such social pressures may discourage the acknowledgement of this stress and any difficulties in coping with the problems of moving are often regarded as personal inabilities or weaknesses.

Most returnee wives would not mention their feelings of dissatisfaction and dislocation, even in personal conversation, except with a few close returnee friends. Some of the respondents in this study reported that they felt their husbands would not want to listen to their readjustment problems and they would consider their wives' problems as unimportant since they were already busy with their own readjustment back to the home offices. For some large firms, particularly those which are likely to move their employees internationally, it is necessary for an overseas employee to have a wife who is highly adaptive, can follow her husband's way of life and is capable of business entertaining. It is important that he can concentrate on his assignment without being bothered by family matters. Very often the wives thought that their husbands would be embarrassed if the company knew that their wives were not able to cope with the stress of re-entry. This might in turn have a negative effect on the husband's promotion prospects.

The lack of attention may also be due to a conscious decision on the wives' part to cover up their problems. Indeed, the researcher found that some wives in this study were reluctant to discuss their problems. Consequently, the wives' problems may have escaped the attention of their husbands and the companies, as well as academic research. Returnee wives have contributed to the 'invisibility' by their own silence. Ardener (1975) reflected this situation, defining women as 'a

muted group' in their perception of themselves and the world around them. This also relates to the way others (whether male or female) perceive them. According to Ardener (1975), women "might be relatively more 'inarticulate' when expressing themselves through the idiom of the dominant (male) group, and silent on matters of special concern to them for which no accommodation has been made in it"(p.xii). She suggests that women form 'a muted group', the boundaries of whose culture and reality overlap with, but are not fully contained by, the 'dominant male group'. This means that women are 'muted' in the sense that their voices are not heard or may not be heard at the level of the 'dominant group' of society.

Returnee wives have no pressure group to bring their readjustment problems to public attention, in spite of their husbands' relatively 'elite' status. This is opposite to the returnee children's situation, whose parents' high social status has brought pressure to bear on the Japanese government to act upon their problems (Goodman, 1990:210). In addition, most wives do not have affiliations with supporting organisations, unlike business expatriates, international students and returnee children who belong to their companies or schools. There are no 'readjustment classes' for mothers so they must reschool themselves using different personal strategies, such as those described in Chapter 5. However, it should be noted that, compared to the passive and internalised ways in which the returnee wives adapted to their own problems on returning into Japanese society, the active role played by Japanese returnee mothers "in bringing the problems of their children to a wider audience and obtaining special treatment" (Goodman, 1990:220) offers an interesting paradox.

The wives in this study frequently mentioned their children's educational problems after re-entry in terms of their psychological reintegration as well as their academic readjustment. Since ties between children and mothers are particularly strong in Japan, and due in part to the competitive nature of the Japanese school system, these mothers may feel unusually strong responsibility for their children's education and this temporarily overshadows their own problems in re-adjustment.

Socially acceptable female roles within the Japanese corporate family are primarily domestic work and child raising (Isa, 1996; Muto, 1994). But the wife often assumes household dominance simply because the husband spends relatively little time at home, and the wife must fill the vacuum created by his frequent absences. Japanese corporate wives have almost unquestioned authority within the family and typically they will make all decisions regarding the raising of the children and will have absolute control of the family's finances.

2) The 'company-wife identity' and gender role attitude

The 'company-wives' in this study had developed certain characteristics as the wives of expatriates in order to adjust to the demands that their husbands' international assignments made of them. Although the returnee wives interviewed did not seem to have a clear image of themselves as company-wives, the shared characteristics of their identity were exhibited in their sociability, adaptability and conservatism. It was evident that the company-wife is a wife who, on the whole, is expected to play a part in her husband's work life and to

subordinate her own interests to the interests of both her husband and the company which employs him.

The interests of company business dictate almost every social activity of the wives (Tremayne, 1984:124). Company-wives are often among the symbols of Japanese corporate culture, responsible for representing the Japanese corporations' business interests and cultural traditions in settings far from home (Muto, 1994; White, 1988). They are asked to play this crucial role without real compensation and in the context of shifting locations that force them to relocate their lives every three to five years. The company-wife's role is not considered to be greatly rewarded by corporations, but she is expected to be committed to it. Few wives in this study directly showed their discontent at being treated as unpaid workers, in the senses both of direct services given and of the opportunity cost of options in their lives which had to be forgone.

Tremayne (1984) focused her research on wives who had lived overseas in *Shell Corporation* communities. She based her study on her own experiences as a *Shell wife* in the Middle East, West Africa, Eastern Europe and Great Britain, as well as on many interviews with the wives of men of managerial rank within *Shell Corporation* returning from different cultures worldwide. She describes the *'Shell wife identity'* as a set of common characteristics noted among the *Shell wives*, which are responses to the institutional demands placed on them by their husbands' occupation. She suggests that acquiring the *Shell wife identity* is necessary to allow the wives to gain entry into the Shell corporate culture and to

become accepted members of Shell communities overseas (p.120). For most wives interviewed in the present study, these demands and roles were taken for granted. Shared conceptions of the kind of woman who is a 'suitable' company-wife for overseas assignment were widespread among the wives.

Some of the wives in this present study might have unwillingly received the supportive roles as company-wives, but they were all aware that their husbands belonged to Japanese corporations in which there are fairly clear norms. These are widely shared and largely agreed upon. From the company-wives' perspective, the company played a critical role in their overseas lives, defining how they spent their time abroad.

Whyte (1951) defines the expected roles for a wife to play as follows: The wife should 1) be highly adaptable; 2) be highly gregarious; 3) accept that her husband belongs to the corporation (p.86). A good wife should also avoid doing certain things. She should not 1) complain when her husband works late; 2) be fussy; 3) engage in controversial activities (Whyte, 1951:87). Although Whyte (1951) described these attributes some forty years ago, the descriptions are highly pertinent to the company-wives interviewed in this study. A wife's failure to conform to these expectations can result in a tense atmosphere for her husband to work in (Tremayne, 1984:125).

As Tremayne (1984) states, an overseas wife "enters a rigidly organised community where a single interest dominates the social aspect of her life to a great extent, and the private aspect of it to some extent" (p.124). In most Japanese overseas communities, a wife's actions are not her private business, but are considered to reflect on her husband's company. Several wives interviewed in this present study reported the tightness of the relationships in the Japanese community overseas, as their social networks were limited to those within the community. Even the associations among the company-wives in the corporate hierarchy "tend to reflect their husbands' position, his financial situation, the length of his service and the age-group of his colleagues" (Young, 1984:79).

As Minoura (1981) suggested, the present study found that, whilst overseas, Japanese corporate families have similar lifestyles in matters such as the education of their children, the areas in which they live, the types of housing and cars considered desirable and the ways of spending weekends and holidays. The material aspects as well as the emotional aspects of the wives' identity are surprisingly traditional and uniform.

More recently however, Japanese women are becoming respected for their own career aspirations (e.g., Itamoto, 1990; Iwao, 1991). Younger women are much more willing to accept a working role than were their mothers. The concept of women working has been becoming the norm and relationships between husbands and wives and between parents and children have been changing (Ida, 1998). Many things that were once taken for granted are now being questioned and these include gender roles and parental responsibility for child raising

(Makita & Ida, 2001).

It is assumed that the younger generations of corporate wives will also begin to show a change of attitude and a more 'Westernised' way of thinking. Younger corporate wives, particularly those who are relatively career-orientated and well educated, may be less tolerant of the expected conformity to Japanese corporate culture.

However, despite the possible exposure to egalitarian norms and values in the host society, some of the returnee wives in this present study seemed to have become even more traditional and conservative through the time they spent overseas, although the degree to which the wives had traditional values prior to the sojourn is not clear. Tremayne (1984:123) refers to, "The assumed but unspoken role that a woman should play in her husband's professional life" as a subordinate function of her husband's occupation and the corporate culture. In Japan, this role is derived from the ideas of conventional family lifestyle, whereby husbands work late at night and devote their lives to their companies, while wives stay at home to take care of children and domestic work. Most wives interviewed in this study justified their submission to the rules of corporate culture as a sacrifice they made for their husbands' professional advancement.

3) The transition from a company-wife to a returnee wife

The findings of this study present the ambivalent and ambiguous world of company-wives whose identities are shaped by the professional commitment of their husbands to their foreign assignments. Whilst there are rigid codes of

conduct within corporations, husbands' occupations and wives' groups when abroad, the wives have no special commitment towards their husbands' company after they return to their home society. Once a company-wife returns to Japan, the company's claims on her and also its support are weakened.

Coming home at the end of a posting frees a wife from her duties as a company-wife. She is released from the "small bonded groups overseas" to "the very different conditions at home" (Clark, 1984:139). Tremayne (1984) describes the dissolution of the net of company-based relationships and obligations surrounding a *Shell wife* when the overseas posting comes to an end and she returns to her 'home'. However, the present study proved that repatriation is anything but simple and is far more intense for the wives than had been assumed previously. Having lived in the expatriates' community, the returnee wife suddenly finds herself in a reality where she has no incentive and no need to utilise her newly acquired qualities. Her cross-cultural knowledge and the skills which she developed to cope with life overseas, do not always apply at home.

Having repeatedly to give up her job (if not her career), education and the lifestyle she has built up at home and in the host country in order to accompany her husband's transfers, has made her feel marginal and has damaged her self-confidence. While her husband has a workplace which offers cultural continuity and identity, she has to restart in search of a new identity and overcome the feelings of marginality in her home society.

However, as recent changes take place in Japan towards 'internationalisation', together with the changing position, status and influence of women in Japanese society, and as more opportunities become available to returnee women, the provision of the more conservative elements of the corporate wife's roles may actually be reducing. Although their re-adaptation can take different forms depending on whether they are fundamentally conservative or internationalised, these changes add another dimension in the consideration of future sociological developments in the role of returnee women. It is hoped that the empowerment of these women and the increasing availability of opportunities will lead the social behaviour of returnee wives towards a more active participation in their social and career lives, and this will provide reassurance in their own identity after re-entry.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

This study explored the phenomenon of re-entry shock from returnee women's perspectives through their readjustment experiences, employing a qualitative interview methodology. The researcher recognised the limitations of the existing research and models of re-entry, and intentionally designed this study to develop tentative hypotheses to be tested in future research. Thus, the study findings should be considered as hypotheses concerning relationships amongst potentially important social and psychological variables for re-entry transitions for the returnees. There are several ways in which future research could strengthen the results of this study. Several approaches are suggested for the purpose of extending transferability of this study's findings and improving our

understanding of returnees' perspectives on readjustment difficulties during their re-entry.

1. International comparative studies

As mentioned in the previous section, there are significant differences in the way in which the overseas experiences of returnees are perceived by different cultures. Future studies are recommended to assess the readjustment process from the perspectives of the returnee wives of other countries in order to identify the differences in reverse culture shock in terms of the severity and duration and in the readjustment difficulties. Based on his extensive cross-cultural research, Hofstede (1991) proposed the degree of individualism-collectivism in a society as one of the criteria for classifying the differences in terms of values and attitudes between national cultures. Triandis (1994) extended Hofstede's findings at the organisational level to an analysis of individuals, and indicated both individualism-collectivism as similar criteria for describing cultural differences. Table 6.3.1 below groups countries according to Hofstede's findings.

Table 6.3.1 List of the Countries according to the Individualism vs. Collectivism Index (IDX) (by Hofstede, 1991)

Countries
Individualist
U.S.A, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, France, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, South Africa, Israel, Spain
Collectivistic
India, Japan, Brazil, Turkey, Mexico, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia

[See Hofstede (1991) for a complete IDX]

International comparative studies based on Hofsted's (1991) classification, utilising different returnee groups, would provide interesting results for comparison. For example, an examination of the re-entry difficulties of returnee women in individualistic cultures such as those of the U.S.A. and Holland is suggested.

2. Longitudinal studies

The temporal aspects of re-entry transitions and cultural identity modification require longitudinal measurement to better understand the effects of changes in home culture identity and perceived marginality, and the causal relationships between these and the repatriation experience. For instance, it is unclear to what extent cultural identity has been changed or transformed as a result of living abroad or whether returnees possessed a multi-cultural identity prior to their sojourns. Longitudinal research would clarify the temporal and causal chain. Gathering data from all respondents at the same points in time (e.g., pre-departure, twelve months after entry to a foreign country and between twelve months and eighteen months after re-entry) would also result in more comprehensive results.

3. Quantitative studies

This study served to highlight the influence of socio-cultural characteristics in the Japanese society, and suggested that the cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism or cultural 'looseness' and 'tightness' (Triandis, 1994) may influence sojourners' responses to repatriation. However, the qualitative, exploratory nature of this research limited it with regard to developing

quantitative results. Developing the conceptualisation of the specific values and norms of the home society that influence the returnees' cultural identity and their perceptions of marginality, and designing surveys that could quantify the results of this study, would be valuable steps in building on its findings. In addition, factor analyses are necessary to confirm the conceptualisation of cultural identity and perceived marginality.

4. Additional variables

In addition to the replicational research described above, some new research ideas were inspired by the findings of the present research. Cross-cultural comparisons of additional characteristics of different home cultures might be explored, given that these characteristics and/or the perceptions of the returnees affect their repatriation experiences and difficulties. For example, it may be that social status is a more important variable for returnee families in countries where more public attention is given to status-related issues, or returnee wives' career issues may be important variables in countries where most married women work outside home. A study along these lines could confirm speculation that additional home culture characteristics may play a part.

Additionally, examining whether cross-cultural readjustment is different from other domestic geographical relocations, i.e., the moves within one's home country, might be useful. This information would enable to discover the differences between international moves and domestic moves in terms of (re)integrating into the local communities for the accompanying spouses.

6.4 Practical Implications

6.4.1 What can multi-national corporations do?

Several wives reported that their husbands' employers provided pre-departure orientation and language training courses for spouses. The outbound programme is intended to prepare families for the culture shock they will meet in the foreign country. The results of the 1997 Berlitz/HFS (now Cendant) Mobility Survey reaffirmed the importance of helping not only repatriate employees, but also their families. The survey indicates that some companies provide support associated with the practicalities of relocating overseas, but they need to do more in helping employees and their families meet the "softer" needs arising from the stress of transition and its effect on their social life, individual development, and career management. In fact, all of the interviewed wives reported that their husbands' companies provided no re-orientation support yet this aspect of cross-cultural adaptation is at least as important as outbound orientation.

Based on the interview results of thirty-five returnee wives who stayed overseas for extended periods, important messages need to be understood by those who organise the re-entry support programmes. It is hoped that the findings from this study will be beneficial in increasing understanding of returnee spouses' needs and will be useful in the design of future re-entry programmes. Re-entry orientations can be structured in a number of ways but the following suggestions may help companies, corporations and organisations to provide better support programmes.

1. Focusing on the specific needs of the returnees (e.g., returnee wives' career issues)

It is important to be aware of the specific combination of facilitating and inhibiting factors of readjustment upon re-entry. A number of factors influence the re-entry process and it should be taken into account that programmes could be designed to meet the specific needs of the re-entrants.

As Ramsey and Schaetti (1999) pointed out, one of the most overlooked needs for returnee wives is career counselling after re-entry. Wives typically had to put their own careers on hold to accompany their husband's transfers abroad. Once home again, they may look to re-engage their own careers outside home. Depending on their length of time abroad and their desire to return to work, they may need some instruction to restarting their careers, as well as practical support when they start job-hunting again. This study found that the returnee wives who had more difficulty finding work outside home upon their return experienced a more stressful re-entry than those who were able to return to an appropriate job or those who did not intend to work outside home.

In this study, most of the returnee wives did not have a full-time job when the interviews were conducted. More than 40 percent of the interviewed wives had had jobs or careers interrupted by their husbands' overseas transfers. Although half of the respondents intended to go back to work shortly after re-entry, the low rate of employment among them (only two wives were working full-time and nine were working part-time) may be due in part of the difficulties of finding adequate work because of their fragmented work history. The unique knowledge and

experience, self reliance and cultural awareness gained during the sojourn are not acknowledged or valued by the majority of Japanese employers.

A typical comment from those returnee wives who had been struggling to find an appropriate job was, "It's not that I dislike Japan but when I try to do what I want here, there are too many obstacles in the way...With each passing year, my chances of finding full-time work here decrease...". Returnee wives who have difficulty in finding an appropriate job upon their return can be expected to experience a stressful re-entry period. Support with job and career development for the spouses after re-entry is of high importance but all too often this is ignored.

2. Preparing the returnees for the reverse culture shock.

Some of the readjustment problems may be due to the suddenness of the change. One month, living the life of an expatriate, with freedom and wealth, but having to fit in as a foreigner to a different culture, climate, language and social group, the next month dropped back into the home culture, with its corresponding responsibilities, social group membership, compliance, financial pressures, "establishing" stresses and all the other problems.

A large proportion of the respondents reported that they had not expected re-entry to be so difficult. As Stori (2001:2) suggests, whilst expatriates expect living overseas to take some getting used to, they imagine coming home to be a matter of course. Returnees do not anticipate another culture shock or trauma and some plan to just "slip into" their previous life styles (Adler, 1981). When

they come home and it turns out to be even harder than adjusting to the foreign environment, they are surprised and confused. The returnees reported being "caught off-guard" by the re-entry shock, since they thought returning home would be easy. This shock is often underestimated and may be deeper than the culture shock experienced in the foreign country because it is unexpected, and receives less prior preparation and social support (Tobin, 1998).

Re-entry programmes to assist returnee wives both before and during the re-entry process are essential. As some of the sojourners had already developed a sense of loss, frustration and depression before they had actually left the host country, programmes should begin well ahead of the return to the home country. Returnees should take time to reflect on how they have changed because of the overseas experience. They should understand the process of re-entry and prepare for their re-entry adjustment.

The "Awareness of change" should be a major factor in the re-entry programme. Most of the wives reported changes in their self-concept and values as a result of living abroad. This suggests that re-entry orientations should provide opportunities for returnees to discover how they have changed and how their new ways of thinking and behaving contrast with their home culture.

3. Providing mentoring and support groups

It was found that most support offered by the husbands' employers was limited to practical or administrative issues, and little or no support was given for psychological difficulties. The accompanying wives were often encouraged to

contact the companies if they needed additional support. However, in many cases, the concern of possible negative effects on their husbands' careers discouraged the wives from reporting personal difficulties to the companies. Consequently the need for support in psychological problems may be greater than expected.

Harvey et al. (1999) suggest that mentoring could help to strengthen the expatriation experience and promote the career development of the returned expatriate. Mentors can be defined as those who provide support, guidance and counselling to the sojourners in order to facilitate their psychological well-being throughout the entire transitional process, i.e., prior to departure, during the stay abroad and after re-entry. Mentoring is important for accompanying wives as they are frequently left on their own without any assistance from their husbands' employers. In their study on potential positive outcomes of mentoring during overseas assignments, Feldman and Bolino (1999) found that the host country's culture has a significant impact on how much mentoring expatriates receive whilst on their foreign assignments and that on-going mentoring (in the form of task assistance, career assistance, psycho-social support, and role modelling) is positively related to job satisfaction, quality of work, and increased knowledge of international business.

It should be noted however, that most of the previous studies on mentoring described the positive aspects of mentoring for expatriate managers derived from Western view points. Mentoring experiences may be quite different for those having other cultural backgrounds. The findings in this study pose a question regarding the plausibility of providing Japanese company-wives with formal

mentoring programmes organised by their husbands' companies. Wives may be unwilling to discuss personal problems with some other person in their husband's company as they fear that the mentors may spread gossip which will lead to a bad impression of their husbands. Others might feel that the mentor is just another company-related social obligation who will put additional pressure on them. For these reasons some wives are reluctant to talk about their problems and it may be difficult for mentors to gain their trust.

In fact, none of the companies and corporations studied here were found to provide the accompanying families with a formal mentoring support programme. Multi-national Japanese corporations should consider whether one-to-one mentoring relationships would work in the Japanese context when they design the support programmes for the spouses. Corporations might be able to establish returnee wives' networks or provide some way that returnees could meet with each other rather than providing a one-to-one formal mentoring programme.

In any case, it is essential for the accompanying wives to be able to discuss personal problems with a trusted and impartial confidante. Having such a mentor or network available throughout the transitional periods will be an effective source of support for the spouses.

6.4.2 What can returnee wives do?

Cross-cultural adjustment should be viewed as a continuum with at least two low periods; entry to another culture and re-entry to one's home culture (Weaver,

1994:9). With an awareness of the process of readjustment and a realisation of the symptoms or stress of readjustment, returnees can develop their own special coping strategies.

1. Anticipating reverse culture shock

Previous research shows that most sojourners do not anticipate difficulty in readapting to their native cultures. However, many of them actually experience more stress during re-entry than during their entry into the foreign culture. The fact that few returnees anticipate reverse culture shock may explain this phenomenon. Most of the respondents in this study reported that they had not expected re-entry would be so difficult whilst they were abroad. However, some of the problems of re-entry might have been minimised or controlled through proper preparation.

Worrying about a potentially stressful event may force one to analyse it and to prepare for its effects (Brislin & Van Buren, 1974). Returnees can rehearse their reactions, think through the course of adjustment and consider alternative ways to deal with the event (Weaver, 1994). Feelings of frustration, loss and confusion upon returning home are common psychological reactions among returnees. It is important that returnees are aware of the potential psychological and social problems that must be faced on re-entering their home culture since expecting a stressful event might help them to cope with it better.

2. Understanding the perceptions/expectations of the home culture

The readjustment distress of some returnees may be due to their home country's

demands for conformity. Returnees to countries which value or even encourage cultural diversity may not experience these repatriation difficulties or may experience different types of re-entry. As Sussman (1986:244) suggested, returnees need to understand their home culture's expectations of them, i.e., what it means to return from another culture and potentially to be different from the mainstream groups; whether the perception of returnees is "receptive", "marginal" or "negative". For those returning to a "collective" or "tight" culture, this is of particular concern because their peer group conformity is significant and they may need to act and think like their compatriots. If their new ideas and behaviours are considered unacceptable, they may experience pressure to conform or even rejection.

3. Being aware of changes

Returnees' homes, families, friends and culture may have changed during their absence. Most returnees tended to expect everything to be as they had left it. Had they not gone abroad, they might not have even noticed these changes (See 'Perceptions about Japan' in Chapter 4 section 4.3.3). Even though the returnees recognise their home environments, they may not feel the same as they did before they left, not only because the returnee has changed but the places may have changed as well (Stori, 2001:7). During their absence, there may have been subtle or dramatic changes in political, economic, environmental, or social scenes which make it difficult for returnees to settle back into the country.

Similarly, people may have changed while the sojourners were away. Their relationships with family or friends may have altered in unanticipated ways.

Intimate relationships cannot simply continue from where they were before departure. The returnees may have had several years of experience that may have altered their characters of personalities. Like it or not, life at home has continued while the sojourners were away. Things have happened to families and friends and events have occurred in their lives which may have caused changes in their feelings, perceptions, opinions, and attitudes. The relationships must be re-evaluated and re-developed, taking into account the changes that have taken place during their years abroad.

The home environment and people at home have changed and so have the returnees. However, they may not even be aware of some of these changes (see 'Value Change' in Chapter 4 section 4.3.3).

All these changes may be positive or negative, but expecting that no change will have taken place is unrealistic. Part of their reverse culture shock is that 'home' is not what they envisioned it to be. Such unexpected changes may be stressful and may add to the difficulties for the returnees. Thus the best preparation is to be aware of the changes in the home environment and in themselves and to be flexible in accepting these.

4. Expecting some negative feelings about the "home" culture

During the stay overseas, sojourners probably assimilated some of the host country's culture and values, learned new ways of doing things and may have gained new views and opinions about their home country. The returnees in this study viewed Japan, perhaps for the first time, from the perspective of a foreigner.

As can be seen in section 4.3.3 'Perceptions about Japan' in Chapter 4, a common tendency was to be highly critical of shortcomings that they did not notice before.

The parochialism of the home society becomes more obvious than before to sojourners, especially in contrast with the more global perspective acquired whilst they were away (Weaver, 1994:4). Although the sojourners might have discovered many hidden aspects of their own culture by living overseas, they may have become more critical of their own society. To adjust to a foreign environment, sojourners had to become tolerant of different points of views, change many of their attitudes, and open their minds to new ways of thinking and behaving. Interestingly, as Weaver (1994:4) suggests, this tolerance and open-mindedness is not always expected by those back home.

Some returnees have idealised their own countries while overseas and are amazed to find that the underground is not as safe, or the streets are not as clean as they had remembered. The people are not as warm and kind as had seemed the case whilst they were away. Sometimes the reality of home is not as enjoyable as the place sojourners had imagined. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than expected, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults in the society not previously noticed or even become quite critical. The ability to remain objective, not to criticise the home country and to retain flexibility will be required as at the beginning of their adaptation to the host society.

5. Being sensitive to the attitudes and feelings of others

Most of the returnee wives in this study reported that they faced many decisions

about which ideas and behaviours from abroad to modify and which to maintain. They had been facing these decisions for some time after returning. Sometimes however, their acquaintances concentrated on small alterations in their behaviour or ideas and seemed annoyed or upset by them. Some people misinterpreted the returnees' words or actions in such a way that communication became difficult. For example, references to the host country or use of the foreign language were interpreted as boasting. These reactions may be motivated by jealousy, fear, or feelings of inferiority. It is therefore important for returnees to monitor themselves and be aware of the feelings of those around them.

6. Joining returnee networks

As described in the "Coping strategies" (Chapter 5 section 5.4), one way to ease the transition is to spend time with other returnees who have had similar experiences abroad. They will be able to provide the returnees with support as they readjust to living at home. As most wives in this study mentioned that they felt at ease when they met other returnee friends, sharing their overseas experiences will reduce the sense of loneliness and frustration. Being able to share concerns and coping strategies with other recent or more experienced returnees can help reduce the depression and isolation that may accompany re-entry. Other returnees often want to share their overseas experiences if they also have multi-cultural and international perspectives. Talking to others who have gone through re-entry experiences is one of the most frequently suggested remedies for re-entry shock in previous re-entry studies (e.g., Isa, 1996; LaBrack, 1996; Stori, 2001). Joining a returnee women's network which provides support for relocating families and facilitates meetings with other returnee women might be a good step for the returnee women.

7. **Involvement in international activities and use of skills acquired abroad**

Along with the new perspectives and attitudes that sojourners have developed, they may have acquired some new skills. Among the interviewed wives, these included increasing their foreign language skills, mastering arts and crafts, gaining a certificate as an instructor and obtaining advanced degrees in their field of study. Some wives were engaged in voluntary activities or working outside home utilising linguistic and artistic skills gained or improved through their overseas stay.

Finding ways to maintain the "international" aspects of their lives, such as becoming involved in cross-cultural activities to maintain their language skills or doing volunteer work with ethnic or multi-cultural groups to use their cross-cultural skills may be a good strategy to alleviate the feelings of loneliness and isolation. Putting their new found knowledge and abilities into action might be an effective way to deal with their transitional stresses.

6.4.3 Concluding remarks

The researcher hopes to help returnee women to anticipate, understand and accept the phenomenon of reverse culture shock and thus to reduce its impact. Returnees must realise that both culture shock and reverse culture shock are normal and can be beneficial. Most of the wives returned with increased self-confidence, flexibility, tolerance and broadened world views. More importantly, most also returned home with a greater awareness of their own culture. At the same time, this study suggests the necessity of increasing the

general public's awareness of multicultural perspectives and the acceptance of cultural diversity in Japanese society.

Many of the returnee wives in this study have demonstrated the fact that cross-cultural experiences contain many positive elements (Adler, 1976, Adler, 1975; Weaver, 1994). However, totally painless readjustments probably occur only amongst those wives who somehow managed never to leave Japan psychologically or never to venture into the host society while on their overseas assignments. It may be a lost opportunity not to engage with another culture while overseas.

Raschio (1987) emphasises that:

> The re-entry process can be a positive and growing experience if returning travelers are prepared to deal with the cognitive dissonance caused by the reconfrontation with the home culture. Adaptation occurs if the returnee is patient, trusting, trusted, analytical and willing to construct a cognitive map of experiences and cultural learning (1987:157).

The researcher hopes to watch the continued growth that the returnee women will probably experience because of their overseas stays. In years to come, they will look back upon these transitions as periods of positive growth in their lives.

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APPENDIX A1

PRE-PILOT INTERVIEWS AND SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Questionnaire Items for Pre-pilot Interviews (conducted in the U.K.)

1. How long have you lived in the U.K.?
2. How long do you expect to stay in the U.K.?
3. Have you ever lived in part(s) of the world other than the U.K. and Japan?
4. During your stay in the U.K., have you made any good friends?
5. Is your best friend a local individual (mothers, non-mothers, or family), a fellow Japanese company-wife or another foreigner?
6. Has your experience in the U.K. opened up new interests, ideas, or opportunities for you?
7. In general, how do you feel about your overall experience in the U.K.?
8. As a result of your experience living in the U.K., how much have you changed in regard to the following areas:
   Your personal development
   Your self-confidence
   Your independence
9. In what ways has your stay affected your views of Japan?
10. How often are you expected to perform the traditional 'company-wife' roles?
11. How do you feel about performing these roles?
12. Do you have any worries or concerns about what will happen to your family upon return home?
13. How do you feel about going home?
14. What are your **Negative** expectations (if any), about going home?
15. What difficulties do you expect upon your return home?

Other Demographic Information

1. Place of residence (post code)
2. Number and ages of children and their school category (UK/Japanese)

Summary of the Pre-pilot Interviews

In the summer of 1999, interviews (in Japanese) were conducted with five Japanese company-wives living in the Greater London area and surrounding counties. The participants were identified through the researcher's personal connections. The

lengths of the interviews ranged from one hour minutes to two hours. In one case when a meeting had to be cut short, the informant responded later in writing, but the written questionnaire response gave less insight than the conversations.

1) Background information

The respondents were aged between 28 and 42 years. Three of them had two children and two of them had one child. Their children ranged in age from 2 to 10 years. Three of the respondents had enrolled their children in the British educational system. These wives lived in either SW (London) or SL postcode areas. The other two wives lived in a "Japanese community" (NW London) and had children in a Japanese school.

Most of these respondents indicated that they had mainly lived within urban backgrounds prior to their sojourn and none of the wives were currently working. All of them had resided in the U.K. for more than two years and intended to stay for another one to three years. One wife had lived in another country (Holland) for over two years prior to her present sojourn.

2) Overall satisfaction regarding life in the U.K.

There were several comments on the greenness, openness, and beauty of the environment, the availability of golf being a big plus for one respondent. Two considered the quiet, relatively slow pace to be an advantage, and all of them found their husbands could now spend more time with their families. The lower cost of living was mentioned by one respondent. The acceptance of individuality and opportunities for women were other factors liked by respondents. Generally, all of the respondents said they were fairly satisfied with their living experience in the U.K.

However, although all of the respondents spoke some English, they often had language problems and most of them were frustrated by their inability to communicate easily. There is nothing unusual about a foreigner in the U.K. having difficult with English. Their language difficulties kept even the most flexible adjustor from associating more closely with the local people. Most of the wives found that it was hard for company-wives to develop activities that truly crossed the cultural line.

As for other frustrations, one wife commented that the English were slow and inefficient. A common complaint among the respondents was that it takes so much

longer to get anything done than it does (or than they imagine it does) at home in Japan.

In most cases, however, the respondents judged their English experience to be satisfactory. Considering the many comments on greenness, openness, the quiet atmosphere, and the slower pace of life in England, they apparently compared their sojourn experiences very favourably with the home environment. But some aspects of culture shock are not easily shaken: the chronic worries about schooling for the children and the frustrating efforts to cross the cultural barrier, for example.

3) Self-development and awareness of change

Mental adaptation as a result of living abroad may come slowly and the full effects of their stays in the U.K. may not appear for a long time yet. However, several wives reported that their personal experiences during their sojourns were valuable to them. Several other wives also found that their attitudes toward foreigners had changed. Almost all felt that they were able to associate with foreigners much more easily than before. "I am more relaxed in associating with foreigners," was a typical comment. Improved self-confidence and an increased tolerance were the most common personal changes recognised among the wives.

4) Thoughts about being a company-wife

The stresses of international relocations present challenges to the wives who are usually prevented from working in the foreign country. Many interviewees recalled the difficulties which they had encountered while relocating. Once adjusted to life overseas however, the company-wives made the most of their new environments. They had developed new hobbies. At first they had found overseas life awkward, when they were expected to participate in some of the tasks in which their husbands were involved. However, some wives became used to sharing the work and responsibilities with their husbands.

When their husbands were given overseas assignments, the wives' roles with respect to the social networks formed by the company loomed larger than previously. Some internal constraints were reported within the Japanese communities. The company-based relationships make it difficult for some wives to have anything but a superficial friendship with those in the corporate social network.

5) Readjustment problems

To the question "How do you feel about going home?" most of the respondents answered that they were eager to go home and no one was explicitly opposed to re-entry. However, most of the wives did not anticipate a reverse culture shock and planned to just "slip into" their previous life styles. One wife commented: "I have personally given the readjustment matter very little thought. I make every attempt not to think about the likelihood of readjustment problems". Another wife said, "I cannot imagine anything more difficult than relocating in a foreign country and adjusting to an alien culture."

Most of the respondents did not detail specific problems anticipated regarding re-entry. In these preliminary interviews, they were also asked to anticipate and name the difficulties that they might encounter upon their return home. Most mentioned their children's education, followed by their own relationships with friends and relatives. Their children's educational readjustment presents the most dramatic problems. Although their own readjustment to the home communities and friendship circles would often be a problem for them, nothing seems to loom as large as the prospect of a child's failure in the Japanese educational system.

Some worried about how they can tell people about their overseas lives. If a satisfying way of life had been discovered during their sojourn, life in Japan might be disappointing by comparison. Other difficulties were envisaged in connection with the broad problem of readapting to a 'tight' Japanese society.

Living away from Japan frees a person from participation in family problems. Others anticipated frustration with the traditional Japanese extended family system and its complex network of obligations. One wife stated, "You don't have to worry about *giri* [obligations] over here...In the UK they have to visit relatives too, but such visits are more personal and meaningful..."

Additional re-entry difficulties arise in connection with accommodation. Families who owned a house that they could move into had an easier resettlement, however, three of the five wives admitted that they would be returning to smaller houses. One of the frustrations comes from a feeling of status gained abroad (often imagined) that would be lost when they returned home.

APPENDIX A2

PILOT INTERVIEWS

Question Items for Pilot Interviews

1. Background data and situational information

2. Would you tell me about your overseas life?
- What were your initial feelings about moving to a foreign country?
- What were your main areas of difficulty during your sojourn?
- What opportunities were available for spouses who wished to get involved in voluntary work or other kinds of community activity?
- Which, if any, did you get involved in?
- How well do you think you fitted into the local community?
- In general, how do you feel about your experience in _____?

3. How did you make friends there?
- How would you describe your "best friend"?
- How did you spend your time with your friends?
- How would you describe your relationship with local families? For example, have you ever invited them to your house or have you ever been invited to visit them?

4. How did you feel about going home?
- Would you have preferred to stay in that country, return to Japan, or go to another country?
- What were your negative expectations (if any) about going home?
- What were your positive expectations (if any) about going home?

5. Did you miss Japan? If yes, in what ways?
- What differences do you find between the lifestyles, thought processes, attitudes, behaviour, habits, etc. of Japanese people and people in _____?
- In what ways has your stay affected your views of Japan?

6. What changes do you see in yourself brought about by living abroad?
- How much do you think you have changed as a result of living abroad?

- What would you say you got out of the overseas experience?

7. What were your main areas of difficulty after returning home?
- How would you describe your readaptation process?
- What would you say are the best things about being back in Japan?
- Have you experienced any emotional responses/reactions since you returned?
- How happy were you when you returned back to your home environment?
- Have you ever felt you would rather be doing anything else now?

8. How do you get along with your family members, relatives (especially your mother-in-law) and friends now?
- How do you feel your absence has affected your relationships with your friends, relatives and neighbours?
- In what ways have you found the relationships have changed since you originally left Japan?
- What strategies have you used to reintegrate with friends, relatives, neighbours and colleagues?

9. How would you describe your roles as a 'company-wife' during your overseas assignment?
- How often were you expected to perform the roles of a 'company-wife'?
- How did you feel about performing these roles?
- How well do you think you fitted into the company-wife's roles?
- In what ways, if any, did you find the demands placed upon you as a 'company wife' different from the roles you are expected to play in Japan?

10. In your relationship with your husband, how did you see yourself during your foreign assignment?
- How did that relationship change after you returned to Japan?
- Has it turned out as you expected?

11. Did you work before the foreign assignment?
- Have you worked since you returned?
- In what ways (if any) has your foreign experience changed your views of women working outside the home?
- How would you describe the situation for working mothers in _____?

- What do you feel in general about mothers working?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

As I explained in the letter or on the phone to you, I am interested in company-wives who have returned to Japan after accompanying their husbands' during an overseas assignment. I would like to hear about your overseas experiences and life after returning to Japan. Please feel free not to answer any questions that you feel unhappy or uncomfortable about.

With your permission, I would also like to record your answers so that I can be sure I have written them down correctly. If at any time you wish the tape recorder to be switched off, please tell me.

Part One: Background data and situational information

(A) Background data

1. Name and age of respondent
2. Family composition—number and ages of children
3. Children's school category—returnee schools, national, public, or private?
4. Husband's job—type of industry and type of job
5. Educational level of respondent

(B) Situational information

1. In which country was your most recent assignment?
2. Were you living primarily in a Japanese community, or not?
3. How long did you live in _____ for your most recent assignment?
4. Competence in local language—How would you rate your ability to read, speak or understand _____?
5. How long is it since you returned to Japan?
6. Other than your most recent assignment, have you ever resided in any other parts of the world?
7. Did you return to the place where you used to live in Japan?

   No → a) How did you choose a house when you returned?

b) Did you find a house and then school or vice versa?

Part Two: Overseas experience

(A) Social circles and interpersonal relationships in the host society

1. What opportunities were available for spouses who wished to get involved in voluntary work or other kinds of community activity?
2. Which, if any, did you get involved in?
3. Were you involved in any activities at your children's school?
4. How well do you think you fitted into the local community?
5. During your stay in _____, did you make any good friends?
6. How would you describe your best friend? (e.g., another mother, non-mother, family, etc.; local individual, fellow Japanese company-wife, or another foreigner)
7. How did you spend your time with your friends?
8. How would you describe your relationship with local families? For example, did you ever invite them to your house or were you ever invited to visit them?
9. Who is your closest friend in Japan?

(B) Overall attitudes towards the sojourn experience

1. What were your main areas of difficulty during your sojourn? Did you have problems in any of the following areas:
   - language, for social purposes
   - adjustment to local customs/lifestyle
   - loneliness or homesickness
   - social relations with local people and/or Japanese networks
   - friendships
   - housing
   - diet
2. What were your initial feelings about moving to a foreign country?
3. What have you found to be the main advantages and disadvantages of your international moves?
4. In general, how do you feel about your experience in _____?
5. As a result of your experience in that country (and if you had the choice), would you prefer to stay in that country, return to Japan, or go to another country?

Part Three: Awareness of change

(A) Views of Japan

1. While you were abroad, did you miss Japan? If so, in what ways?
2. What differences do you find between the lifestyles, thought processes, attitudes, behaviour, habits, etc. of Japanese people and people in _____?
3. In what ways has your stay affected your views of Japan? Do you feel you are more positive/negative now about Japan?

(B) Awareness of changes in Self resulting from foreign experience

1. What changes in yourself do you see or feel as a result of your foreign experience? For example, have your experiences in _____ opened up new interests, ideas, or opportunities for you?
2. How much do you think you have changed with regard to personal development, self-confidence and independence?
3. What would you say you got out of the overseas experience?

(C) The wife's job: Attitudes to paid work and paid work roles

1. Did you work before the foreign assignment?
   Yes → a) What kind of work?
   b) How did you feel about stopping?
   c) Were you able to take the same job upon your return?
2. Have you worked since you returned?
   Yes → a) What kind of work?
   b) What is the main reason for working?
   c) What help, if any, do you get for your children?
   No → What kind of job will you take if you do go back to work?
3. In what ways, if any, has your foreign experience changed your views of women working outside the home?
4. How would you describe the situation for working mothers in _____?
5. What do you feel in general about mothers working?
6. Does your husband have the same views as you?

(D)Relationship with husband

1. Was your husband often away from home during the foreign assignment?
   Yes → How did you feel? What adaptation did you make?

2. How did this situation change after you returned to Japan?
3. In your relationship with your husband, how did you see yourself during your foreign assignment? (e.g., someone with whom he could talk over his problems, caring for the house and children, as a help to him with his work in practical ways, as a social asset to him in his career, etc.)
4. How did this relationship change after you returned to Japan? Has it turned out as you expected?

Part Four: Difficulties (if any) upon return

(A) Feelings about returning (anticipated difficulties)

1. How keen did you feel about going home?
2. What did you consider and discuss when the return was being planned?
3. During your overseas stay, did you find yourself worrying about what would happen to you and your family upon returning home?
   Yes → What were your negative expectations (if any) about going home?
4. What were your positive expectations (if any) about going home?

(B) Problems and difficulties experienced after returning to Japan

1. What were your main areas of difficulty after returning home? How was your re-adaptation to the following?:
   - physical environment (e.g., housing standards, environment, opportunities for using cultural facilities, climate, etc.)
   - financial aspects (e.g., income reduction, cost of living, standard of living)
   - job and profession (e.g., problems in starting/restarting your own career)
   - children's readjustment to schools
   - relationships with relatives and peer/social groups
2. How do you get along with your relatives and friends now? How do you feel your absence affected your relationships with your relatives, friends or neighbours (or colleagues if applicable)? In what ways, if any, have you found the relationships have changed since you originally left Japan?
3. Was the readaptation process stressful?
   Yes → How did you cope with the difficulties? Where did you seek support to cope with your problems?
4. Does your husband's firm have any repatriation support programmes?

(C) General psychological well being

1. What would you say are the best things about being back in Japan?
2. How happy were you after returning to Japan?
3. Have you experienced any emotional responses/reactions (e.g., feelings of confusion, isolation, disappointment, frustration, loneliness, insecurity, uselessness, etc.) since you returned?

   Yes → When?
4. How happy are you now? If you compare your life now with what it was like during your foreign assignment, would you say you are happier now, less happy or about the same? Please explain why you feel this way.
5. Have you ever felt you would rather be doing anything else now?

   Yes → Please explain.

Part Five: Thoughts about being a company-wife

(A) Involvement in husband's work

1. Did your husband talk to you about his work?
2. Did you feel you would like to know more about his work?
3. Did you feel you could help him actively in his work?

(B) Performing the company-wife's roles

1. How would you describe your roles as a 'company-wife' during your overseas assignment? (e.g., entertaining official visitors at home, taking part in company-organised parties, helping and instructing corporation new comers).
2. How often were you expected to perform the roles of a 'company-wife'?
3. How did you feel about performing these roles?
4. How well do you think you fitted into the company-wife's roles?
5. In what ways, if any, did you find the demands placed upon you as a 'company wife' different from the roles you are expected to play in Japan?
6. Did your husband's firm arrange occasions when colleagues and their wives could meet each other socially?

   Yes → a) What sort of occasions were these?(e.g., office parties, formal dinners, etc.)

   b) What were your feelings about these occasions?

I am about to conclude the interview, are there any other comments you would like to make?

Supplementary Interview Question Bank for In-depth Interviews

- How much time did it take for you to feel accustomed to Japanese society again?
- How much time did it take for you to feel comfortable with your family/friends?
- Can you speak to friends about the depth of your experiences in _____? Are your relationships with old friends better, the same or worse than before? Why?
- Do you feel you missed any opportunities because you were not in your own country?
- Did anything actually change while you were away, e.g., housing, home-life, friends, etc.?
- Could you say that you went through a series of stages of re-entry? If yes, can you describe them? Can you describe your first month back? The next few months? The past few months? Do you feel you are now completely adjusted? Why/Why not?
- Do you feel that you belong in Japan? Are you comfortable here? Are you happy being a Japanese?

APPENDIX C

LETTERS TO FIRMS, SCHOOLS AND NETWORKS REQUESTING COOPERATION

Dear Sir/Madam

I am enrolled for PhD research at the University of Surrey (U.K.), Department of Sociology. My current research focus is an investigation into the readjustment of returnee wives to Japanese society.

This will help to clarify some significant contemporary problems concerning Japanese employees and their families' readjustment in Japanese society. By identifying any problems which may hinder the spouses' readaptation and developing our understanding about their re-entry experiences, I also feel that this work can also help people suffering the problems and stresses of reverse culture shock.

I sincerely hope you can contribute to the success of my research by permitting me to seek respondents from your firm (school/group). I hope that you can help me with this request.

1. BENEFITS

The research will help to develop our understanding of the re-entry experiences of returnee wives. It will help us to examine the issues in relation to the kinds of information and support they need to overcome the difficulties of the repatriation process. The findings of this study will also be of interest to multinational companies, returnee schools and networks in order to provide more effective repatriation support programmes for employees and their families.

2. PROCEDURES

If you can agree to co-operate for this research, potential respondents will be sent a letter which requests their participation and explains the purpose and procedures of the study.

If the respondents feel they would like to participate, an appointment will be made for a confidential interview by the researcher at a mutually convenient time and place. The interview will last approximately one hour. The interview will be tape recorded if the respondent agrees. No information identifying the individuals will be included in the report and the privacy of those participating is assured.

3. RISK AND DISCOMFORT

There will be no risk or discomfort in participating in this study. If at any time during the interview, the participant should feel uncomfortable or experience undue stress or anxiety, the interview will be discontinued.

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained. The name of participants will not be connected to information. Although the findings analysed in the research study will have a wider audience, no one but the course supervisors and examiners would read the whole study. A transcript of the tape will be available to the participant if they so wish, to check for accuracy. A summary of the study will be provided to those interested in this study upon completion of the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Yours sincerely,

Yuki Shibuya
Research Student
Department of Sociology
Surrey University
(0423-33-4304)

APPENDIX D

INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN THE RESEARCH (TO THE POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS)

Dear Madam,

I am currently involved in a research project addressing the repatriation experiences of returnee wives and their lives after returning to Japan. The study is performed as part of my PhD research at the University of Surrey (U.K.), Department of Sociology.

The purpose of this study is to develop our understanding of the experiences of returnee wives in Japan after completing overseas assignments. It will help us to examine the issues in relation to the kinds of information and support they need to overcome the difficulties of the repatriation process. The findings of this study will also be helpful to multinational companies in developing effective repatriation support programmes for employees and their families.

I would be very grateful if you would assist me by providing a description of your experiences, your thoughts about your overseas experience, how you feel about being back in Japan and what difficulties you may have experienced after return.

Your participation in this project will provide useful information on the topic. You are asked to participate in an interview which will take approximately one hour during which you will be asked to recall specific episodes and events in your overseas life and life after returning to Japan.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw at any point. All the interview data will be kept anonymous and any information you give will only be used for research purposes. Your name will not be connected to the information.

If you are willing to help please return the tear-off slip below or telephone me on 0423-33-4304 or 090-9237-9470(mobile), xm7-sby@asahi-net.or.jp (email) and I will contact you shortly afterwards to arrange an interview.
I hope that you will be willing to take part.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Yuki Shibuya
Research Student
Department of Sociology
Surrey University

I will / will not be willing to take part in the above research.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name: ..... Telephone No. .....

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

I understand that my participation in this interview is part of a research study investigating the experiences of returnee wives who accompanied their husbands during overseas assignments, and their lives after returning to Japan. I understand that my participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded for the purposes of analysis. I may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, by informing the researcher. I also understand that the information provided will be kept confidential. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions regarding this research and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Name: ..... Tel No. .....

APPENDIX F

Data Sheet 1

No.	Respondent	Int No.	Age	No. of children	Age of child (yongest) upon reentry	Child (youngest) less 5	Husband's occupation	The First Assignment (Country)
			AGE	NOCHILD	AGEYOUNG	AGECH5	HOCCUPA	COUNTRY
			1. 32-34			1.Age	1.Finance	1.U.S.A
			2. 35-39			under 5	2.Manufacturer	2.Europe
			3. 40-44			2.Age	3.Trading	3.South East
			4. 45-49			over 5	4.Gas/electric supply	Asia
			5. 50-54				5.Public servant	4.New Zealand
							6.Medical doctor	
							7.Teaching professional	
							8.Others	
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	3	2	8	2	4	3
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	4	2	13	2	8	1
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	3	2	10	2	8	2
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	2	2	11	2	5	1
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	2	2	10	2	7	2
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	3	2	7	2	8	2
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	2	2	6	2	1	3
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	2	2	4	1	2	2
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	2	3	3	1	7	1
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	2	2	3	1	1	1
11	Mrs. W	PI11	2	2	5	1	3	2
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	3	2	7	2	8	1
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	3	1	3	1	8	2
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	3	2	10	2	2	1
15	Mrs. H	MI15	5	2	24	2	2	2
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	3	2	6	2	1	1
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	3	1	10	2	5	1
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	2	1	10	2	8	1
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	4	2	9	2	2	1
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	1	3	0	1	8	4
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	3	3	7	2	3	2
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	2	2	5	1	1	2
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	4	2	9	2	3	1
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	1	2	0	1	6	1
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	3	2	8	2	2	1
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	2	2	3	1	8	1
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	3	1	9	2	3	2
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	2	1	8	2	2	1
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	2	2	5	1	3	1
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	3	0	99	9	5	2
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	3	1	98	1	3	1
32	Mrs. A	MI32	2	2	98	1	8	3
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	3	2	8	2	1	2
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	3	0	99	9	4	1
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	2	2	6	2	6	1

Data Sheet 2

No.	Respondent	Int No.	Area	English-Speaking Country or not	Length of stay (years) (First assignment)	Less than or more than 4 years (First assignment)	Less than or more than 5 years (First assignment)	TTL length of stay (years)
			AREA 1.U.S.-Europe (and New Zealand) 2.Asian Nations	ENGCOUNT 1.English-Speaking Countries 2. None English-Speaking Countries	LENGSTAY	LESS4RE 1.Less than 4 years 2. 4 years and more	LESS5RE 1.Less than 5 years 2. 5 years and more	TTLENGT
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	2	2	5.5	2	2	5.5
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	1	1	7	2	2	7
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	1	2	5	2	2	10
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	1	1	3	1	1	3
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	1	2	4	2	1	4
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	1	1	2	1	1	2
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	2	2	7	2	2	7
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	1	1	5	2	2	5
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	1	1	14	2	2	14
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	1	1	5	2	2	5
11	Mrs. W	PI11	1	1	5	2	2	5
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	1	1	4	2	1	4
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	1	2	5	2	2	5
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	1	1	3	1	1	3
15	Mrs. H	MI15	1	1	8	2	2	8
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	1	1	2	1	1	7
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	1	1	1.5	1	1	4.5
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	1	1	2	1	1	10
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	1	1	4	2	1	9
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	1	1	3	1	1	3
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	1	1	5	2	2	5
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	1	2	2	1	1	6
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	1	1	1.5	1	1	10.5
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	1	1	3	1	1	3
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	1	1	4	2	1	4
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	1	1	4	2	1	4
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	1	2	4	2	1	4
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	1	1	14	2	2	14
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	1	1	4	2	1	4
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	1	1	2	1	1	2
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	1	1	5	2	2	5
32	Mrs. A	MI32	2	1	5	2	2	5
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	1	2	6	2	2	10
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	1	1	3	1	1	3
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	1	1	5.5	2	2	5.5

Data Sheet 3

No.	Respondent	Int No.	TTL length of stay (years)	Less than or more than 4 years (TTL)	Less than or more than 5 years (TTL)	Time been back (years)	Time been back (less than or more than 2 years)	Multiple assignments
			TTLENGT	LESS4TTL	LESS5TTL	BEENBACK	LESS2BACK	MULTIASSI
				1.Less than 4 years 2.More than 4 years	1.Less than 5 years 2.More than 5 years		1.Less than 2 years 2.More than 2 years	1.First Timers 2.Reapeaters
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	5.5	2	2	3.5	2	1
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	7	2	2	3	2	1
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	10	2	2	1	1	2
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	3	1	1	4	2	1
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	4	2	1	1	1	1
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	2	1	1	4	2	1
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	7	2	2	1	1	1
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	5	2	2	3	2	1
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	14	2	2	0.5	1	1
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	5	2	2	3	2	1
11	Mrs. W	PI11	5	2	2	3	2	1
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	4	2	1	2	1	1
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	5	2	2	5	2	1
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	3	1	1	2	1	1
15	Mrs. H	MI15	8	2	2	4	2	1
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	7	2	2	3	2	2
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	4.5	2	1	2	1	2
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	10	2	2	2	1	2
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	9	2	2	3	2	2
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	3	1	1	3	2	1
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	5	2	2	2	1	1
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	6	2	2	1	1	2
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	10.5	2	2	3	2	2
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	3	1	1	2	1	1
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	4	2	1	3	2	1
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	4	2	1	3	2	1
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	4	2	1	3	2	1
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	14	2	2	3	2	1
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	4	2	1	2.5	2	1
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	2	1	1	3.5	2	1
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	5	2	2	4.5	2	1
32	Mrs. A	MI32	5	2	2	1	1	1
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	10	2	2	1.5	1	2
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	3	1	1	4	2	1
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	5.5	2	2	2.5	2	1

Data Sheet 4

No.	Respondent	Int No.	Frequency of Contact with the Host Communities	Involvement in a Japanese Community	Local Language Ability	Overall adjustment to a foreign culture	Willingness to move abroad
			FREQHOST 1.Infrequent 2.Fairly frequent 3.Frequent	INVOLJAP 1.Low 2.Medium 3.High	LANGUAGE 1.Poor 2.Enough to cope with 3.Fairly good 4.Fluent	ADJFORE 1. Not well adjusted 2. Reasonably well adjusted 3. Well adjusted	WILMOVE 1.Negative (Worried, Concerned) 2.Neutral (Realistic) 3.Positive (Excited, (Looked forward to)
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	1	2	2	2	1
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	2	2	2	2	3
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	1	1	1	1	2
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	2	3	2	2	3
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	2	3	2	2	2
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	2	2	2	2	1
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	1	3	1	1	1
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	3	1	4	3	3
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	3	3	4	3	2
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	3	1	4	3	3
11	Mrs. W	PI11	2	3	3	2	3
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	2	3	2	2	3
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	1	3	2	2	2
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	3	1	2	3	1
15	Mrs. H	MI15	3	2	4	3	3
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	2	3	2	2	2
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	3	2	2	2	3
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	2	2	3	1	2
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	1	3	1	2	1
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	1	3	2	1	3
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	2	2	2	3	1
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	1	3	2	1	1
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	3	1	3	3	2
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	3	1	2	3	3
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	1	3	2	2	3
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	3	1	2	3	1
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	3	1	2	3	2
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	2	2	2	2	1
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	2	2	3	2	1
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	3	1	3	3	3
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	2	2	3	2	2
32	Mrs. A	MI32	1	3	2	2	2
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	3	2	4	3	3
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	3	1	4	3	3
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	3	3	2	2	3

Data Sheet 5

No.	Respondent	Int No.	Willingness to return	Perception toward overseas experience	Value change	Thoughts about being a company-wife	Perception toward Japan
			WILRETN 1.Eager to go home 2.Moderate desire to return 3.Wanted to remain longer	PERCEOE 1.Negative 2.Not entirely positive 3.Positive 4.Very positive	VALCHG 1.Positive value change 2.No value change	BEINGCW 1.Positive views didn't mind, no pressure willing to do 2.Negative views felt pressure, d got annoyed	PERCEJP 1.Positive 2.Neutral 3.Negative
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	2	2	1	2	3
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	2	4	1	1	3
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	2	3	1	2	3
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	3	4	1	1	3
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	2	3	1	2	3
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	3	3	1	1	3
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	3	3	1	1	3
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	3	3	1	1	3
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	2	4	1	1	3
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	3	4	1	1	3
11	Mrs. W	PI11	3	3	2	1	3
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	3	3	1	1	3
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	3	3	1	1	2
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	3	4	1	1	3
15	Mrs. H	MI15	2	4	1	1	1
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	3	3	2	1	2
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	2	3	1	1	1
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	2	3	1	1	3
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	1	2	2	1	3
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	1	3	1	1	3
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	3	4	1	1	3
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	1	1	1	2	1
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	3	4	1	1	3
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	3	3	1	2	3
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	3	4	1	1	3
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	3	3	1	1	3
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	3	4	1	2	3
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	2	2	1	1	3
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	2	3	1	1	3
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	3	4	1	2	3
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	2	3	1	1	3
32	Mrs. A	MI32	3	3	1	1	3
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	2	4	1	2	3
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	3	4	1	1	3
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	2	3	1	1	2

Data Sheet 6

No.	Respondent	Int No.	Overall readjustment	Current job status	Future job plan
			READJUST	CJOBS	FJOBS
			1.No readjustment difficulties	1.Not working	1.Has no plan
			2.Minor readjustment	2.Part-time	2.Plans to take a part-time job
			3.Severe readjustment difficulties	3.Full-time	3.Plans to take a full-time job
				4.Training	4.Has plans for further training towards a job
				5.Voluntary work	
1	Mrs. N1	PI1	2	5	5
2	Mrs. T1	PI2	2	5	5
3	Mrs. N2	PI3	3	5	5
4	Mrs. F1	PI4	2	5	5
5	Mrs. N3	PI5	2	3	3
6	Mrs. U1	PI6	2	1	1
7	Mrs. K1	PI7	2	1	4
8	Mrs. O1	PI8	2	5	2
9	Mrs. S1	PI9	2	2	3
10	Mrs. K2	PI10	2	2	3
11	Mrs. W	PI11	2	1	2
12	Mrs. S2	PI12	2	1	1
13	Mrs. T2	MI13	2	2	2
14	Mrs. K3	MI14	3	1	2
15	Mrs. H	MI15	1	5	5
16	Mrs. Y	MI16	2	1	1
17	Mrs. F2	MI17	3	3	3
18	Mrs. T3	MI18	2	2	2
19	Mrs. M1	MI19	2	1	1
20	Mrs. S3	MI20	1	1	1
21	Mrs. T4	MI21	2	2	2
22	Mrs. K4	MI22	1	1	1
23	Mrs. O2	MI23	3	1	2
24	Mrs. F3	MI24	2	4	3
25	Mrs. T5	MI25	3	1	2
26	Mrs. O3	MI26	2	1	2
27	Mrs. K5	MI27	3	2	2
28	Mrs. K6	MI28	2	1	1
29	Mrs. T6	MI29	2	2	4
30	Mrs. S4	MI30	3	2	3
31	Mrs. U2	MI31	2	1	1
32	Mrs. A	MI32	2	1	1
33	Mrs. M2	MI33	2	1	2
34	Mrs. T7	MI34	3	2	3
35	Mrs. O4	MI35	2	1	1